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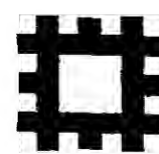
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It is like someone finding something valuable on The Antiques Roadshow, says judge

Woman accused of deception turns tables on Sotheby's

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

AN INTERIOR designer spoke of her relief yesterday after being cleared of trying to cheat Sotheby's over a pair of antique tables. Denise Butler had wept as Recorder John Roberts, QC, told her she was like someone on *The Antiques Roadshow* who had suddenly discovered she owned something valuable.

Miss Butler had been accused of trying to deceive the auction house after offering for auction a pair of 1785 George III rosewood tables as un-restored originals when she had divided them in two after buying one table at an auction. The judge said she was entitled to restore them and "pump up the volume" of the price. "Where is the deception in that?" he asked.

Miss Butler bought the ornately decorated round table for £7,500 at an auction in March 1995 but then found it was made up of two semi-circular Georgian side tables, Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court was told.

She spent £4,500 on "beautifully restoring them" and then offered them for sale through Sotheby's, which placed them in a sale catalogue for an estimated £40,000 to £50,000, the judge said. Sotheby's had

not spotted the restoration but called in the police when the auctioneer who had originally sold the table to Miss Butler saw it in the catalogue.

The judge said Miss Butler was like someone who had bought a dirty painting from a market stall, cleaned it up and found it was a Constable. "Those of you who watch *The Antiques Roadshow* see how shocked a person is when an expert says that something you thought was worth £5 turns out that they are sitting on something worth £5,000. This lady found herself in the position that something she bought for £7,500 with four legs was actually two tables with eight legs."

Regarding Miss Butler's claim to Sotheby's that the tables were a family heirloom, he said it was a matter of misrepresentation rather than deception.

The judge ordered the jury to acquit Miss Butler on three counts of deception after Simon Denison, for the prosecution, said he did not feel he could proceed.

Miss Butler, who trained as an interior designer, said: "I am innocent and have been from the outset. I am so pleased that at long last justice

has actually been done." She said she had not decided what to do with the tables.

A spokesman for Sotheby's said the decision to prosecute Miss Butler had been made by the Crown Prosecution Service, not the auction house. "When serious questions of authenticity are raised over objects to be offered in any Sotheby's sale, it is our policy to withdraw them from sale until such questions have been resolved satisfactorily."

Miss Butler said the tables had been her first big project after she became interested in antiques when she became ill with multiple sclerosis in 1985. She read books on the subject and had occasionally bought antiques to restore them.

"I borrowed money from my parents after spotting the potential of the table. It was my first big project," she said. "I'm still angry at what I've been put through. Although my name has been cleared I feel I should never have been charged, let alone put through the ordeal of court. I have been through such a terrible time over the past 18 months. I can't believe it's all over."

Henry Neville, chairman of the British Antique Dealers Association, which represents



Denise Butler yesterday: "I'm angry at what I've been put through. I feel I should never have been charged"

the country's 400 leading antiques dealers, said the court case was highly unusual because one would normally expect auction-house experts to spot any restoration. "I wouldn't expect a private person to declare restoration be-

fore selling a piece because the auction house should have the expertise to judge it before selling it on — that is the expertise that an auction house markets itself on. The same goes for dealers."

He said the main issue was

the difference between restoration and reproduction. "Any piece over 200 years old is bound to have been conserved in some way or else it wouldn't be here today," he said. "It's a question of degree. As long as you are not passing off

something modern as an antique or passing something off as something different then I don't think it can be classed as deception, but I would hope to be able to read the degree of restoration involved in the sales catalogue."

Abbey hymns and Blair lunch for golden Royals

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will mark their fiftieth wedding anniversary in November with a thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey and lunch with Tony Blair and his Government.

The lunch will draw its 350 guests from a wide spectrum of national life far beyond Westminster. The idea was inherited from John Major, but Downing Street stressed last night that the Government was as keen to mark the Queen's anniversary as the previous administration.

Despite her wish that the golden wedding should be regarded as a private landmark rather than a state occasion, and should not be a burden on the taxpayer, details announced by Buckingham Palace yesterday indicate that there will be no shortage of events to make the occasion memorable.

After the Abbey service, attended by government and opposition leaders, the Queen and the Duke will undertake a walkabout before lunch at the Banqueting House, Whitehall. In the evening, they will host a private dance at Windsor Castle.

Celebrations will begin on July 5, when they will attend the Royal Pageant of the Horse, an equestrian extravaganza in Windsor Great Park which has been masterminded by Colonel Mike Parker, producer of the Royal Tourna-

ment. Although it has no official status, the event is expected to involve more than 1,000 horses and has outgrown the original planned venue, Ascot racecourse.

On July 15, 4,000 couples who were married in 1947 and who are still together will attend a garden party given by the Queen and the Duke at Buckingham Palace. More than 40,000 couples applied to attend and names were put in a ballot. Letters were sent to the winners yesterday in envelopes bearing a souvenir gold stamp from the Royal Mail. The 36,000 unlucky contenders will receive a signed consolation message, similarly stamped.

On November 14, the Queen and the Duke will host a reception at Windsor Castle to mark the completion of its £40 million restoration after the 1992 fire. Architects, builders and craftsmen will be among the 1,500 guests in St George's Hall and the Grand Reception Room, which were badly damaged in the blaze.

On November 19, the eve of their anniversary, the Queen and the Duke will be guests at a lunch given by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London in Guildhall: in the evening they will attend a gala at the Royal Festival Hall. On December 8 they will attend a dinner given by the Privy Council in the House of Lords.

Frog lover who gave it all up bags new species

BY PAUL WILKINSON

AN AMATEUR naturalist who gave up his building society job, possessions and savings to go frog-hunting in Africa has discovered four new species.

Martin Pickersgill, 41, who already has one frog named after him, even left behind Christine Watson, his long-term girlfriend, when he set off on a ten-month trek from Cape Town to northern Africa.

Ms Watson, 40, remained at home at their house in Hunslet, Leeds, processing the scores of photos he sends back of his observations. Before setting out last autumn he said: "It was a choice between Christine and the frog and I chose the frog. My friends think I'm nuts." He reckons that the expedition will have cost him more than £20,000 by the time he returns in August.

On his 10,000-mile route through Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia to Tanzania, Mr Pickersgill has had malaria and other infections, been attacked by hippos and eaten strange fare, including the meat of a monitor lizard that had just been hit by a vehicle. But he did manage to record four new species of African reed frog.

Mr Pickersgill has been keen on frogs since he was 13. In 1983 he made a similar trip to Natal and discovered the species now named after him: the Pickersgill Reed Frog, or *Hyperolius pickersgilli*.

Guide book turns up its nose at smelly Britons

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT
TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

VISITORS to Britain are being warned that the country is alarmingly expensive, has some of the grimmest and ugliest buildings, poor plumbing and dismal cities filled by car parks and windswept shopping precincts.

A new edition of the *Lonely Planet* guide book to Britain says that the countryside may be beautiful, but the nation is inhabited by unwashed, hobby-obsessed people, who speak in impenetrable accents and "don't understand that a good shower is one of life's basic essentials". The guide says that, because Britain has so many attractions and positive features, "to ignore or gloss over the negative one is misleading the tourist needlessly".

A team of researchers, led by *Lonely Planet* founder Tony Wheeler, spent two years updating their earlier guide, whose criticisms caused a whose criticism caused a furor when it was published two years ago. But it proved so popular among young backpackers, especially from

the Far East, that a new edition has been printed. "This is not a horror guide, but an honest guide," said Jennifer Cox of Australian-based *Lonely Planet* in London. "As the number of foreign tourists rose by 17 per cent last year and tourism now accounts for 5 per cent of our GDP, there is no way Britain is regarded as a bad place to come."

Nonetheless, the authors heap stinging criticisms on destinations such as Tintagel which, they claim, "sold its soul to the great god Tourist, for whom innumerable car parks and tacky tea shops have been provided". Coventry is described as "a dismal cityscape of car parks, ring roads and windswept shopping precincts". Skegness is "the kind of place the English middle and upper class wouldn't dream of being seen in."

The whole of Wales — part of which is "breathtakingly beautiful" — is dismissed as "rather like England's, unloved backyard — a suitable place for mines, pine plantations and nuclear power stations. Even the most enduring of its symbols — the grim mining towns and powerful castles — represent exploitation and colonialism."

There are dire warnings about how expensive the country is and how prices are likely to rise by around 5 per cent a year. Prices in London, say the authors, are "horrible". Ficcally Circus is "fume-choked and pretty uninspiring". However, the Lake District is "perfect" and Scotland is "exhilarating".

Travel News, pages 42-43



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CONSUMER HEALTH

Seventies feminist who called for men to do housework targets family values for Harman

Wine bar women's champion moves into government

By Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Correspondent, and Glen Owen

A WOMAN who fought to allow women to drink at the bar of El Vino's, the Fleet Street wine bar, and called on fathers to do their share of the housework, is to be Harriet Harman's specialist adviser on women's issues.

Anna Coote, 50, said yesterday: "I am still a feminist, yes, but my views have changed. We all have. The Labour Party has moved on." Ms Coote came to national prominence aged 20 supporting a move for the Pill to be given to any student on request.

As the editor of *Student*, the Edinburgh University newspaper, she also forced the resignation of Malcolm Muggeridge, then rector, after an article she wrote claiming he was not doing his job of representing students' views to the university authorities. Mr Muggeridge had angered students after describing their cravings for "the old slobs' escapes of dope and bed".

Ms Coote, who has an 11-year-old daughter and lives with an academic, was rather coy yesterday about her campaigning past on women's issues. "I probably don't agree with everything I said and wrote in the 1970s. My views have been tempered by experi-



Pauline Barrett, new policy head

ence. But I am very proud of some of the things I did. I have been probably much more low profile in recent years."

When reminded that she had once called on men to do half the housework, she said: "That was a very outrageous thing to say in the 1970s, but people would laugh about it today."

During that period she married Laurie Taylor, the sociologist, but they have since divorced. Ms Coote was also an early champion of battered wives and, with her friend

Tess Gill, a solicitor, was one of the first to call for rape victims to keep their anonymity in court.

In a legal guide for the National Council of Civil Liberties in 1972, Ms Coote also highlighted the anomaly that women could not sue for loss of sex if their husbands were injured by somebody's negligence, but that a man so deprived could sue. In those pioneering days former colleagues recall that she was "very left wing, very Old Labour". One said: "I remember her once looking askance at the fact I was wearing a raincoat with a fur lining. Her expression said everything."

She was deputy editor at the *New Statesman* under Hugh Stephenson from 1978-82 who described her yesterday as "a rough old bird". "She thought she should get my job, which made things tricky between us, but then she turned herself into a TV personality. She has always been very interested in the feminist agenda, so I suppose it is not too surprising."

Ms Coote, whose late father, John, was a former executive of Express Newspapers, worked at *The Observer* and became deputy editor of the



Anna Coote says her views have been tempered by experience since the radical early days. "But I am very proud of what I did."

New Statesman before moving to television documentary work, including a three-year stint from 1982-85 as editor of *Diverse Reports*, the Channel 4 current affairs series.

In her new role she will divide her time between the new two-day post for Ms Harman and her job as deputy director of the Institute of Public Policy Research, the left-wing think tank. After

campaigning on the fringes, Ms Coote says she is delighted to be part of the new Government. "There is a vital task just re-engaging women in politics, and for them to look to the Government and speak up on their behalf."

The need for childcare, particularly for school-age children, and where parents can have guaranteed care after school and during the hol-

days is a priority issue. "We must develop family-friendly policies that make a difference for parents. A lot of it is to do with attitude and of course any improvement in women's lives is inextricably linked with improvement in men's lives."

Many of her ideas are included in *The Family Way*, the book she has co-authored with Ms Harman and Patricia

Hewitt, now a Labour MP. "Our theme was that children had to be dependent and be brought up to be dependable parents. We make the argument about the importance of women not being powerless, poor and dependent."

But Ms Coote said yesterday she had also recently completed some interesting analysis on the different influences on boys and girls, and

how each child needs to develop a sense of values.

She has also worked on the creation of Citizens' Juries and looked at a new policy agenda for health. Ms Coote will develop new policy with Pauline Barrett, 50, who is married with two children, the civil servant selected by Ms Harman, to head the new women's unit. The two women already know each other well.

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Al Fayeds were stitched up by DTI, says Wardle

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

MOHAMED Al Fayed and his brother, Ali Fayed, were "stitched up" by a Department of Trade and Industry inquiry, Charles Wardle, a former Home Office minister, said yesterday.

Mr Wardle called for a re-examination of the 1990 report into the Al Fayeds' takeover of House of Fraser and Harrods, which, he said, had forced the Home Office to reject a subsequent application for British citizenship by Ali Fayed because of its "highly adverse criticism" of the men.

In a Commons speech that was implicitly critical of Michael Howard, the former Home Secretary - under whom he served as the minister responsible for nationality and immigration - Mr Wardle said that he had been "instructed" in January 1994 to find a way of reversing the decision to reject Ali Fayed's application for British citizenship.

Without once naming Mr Howard, he said it had been "recommended" to him at the Home Office "that officials might simply cast a blind eye to the (DTI) report if more favourable references were to be found".

Mr Wardle said: "That would not only have been unlawful and would have offended the high standards of civil servants in the nationality division of the Home Office, but would also have left the door open for all manner of future abuse of the British Nationality Act. It simply



Wardle called for new look at DTI report

would not have done." He said the intervention was "perhaps ... due to an incomplete knowledge of British nationality legislation."

Mr Wardle also recalled the "intensive" press briefing which took place when it became clear that the Al Fayed citizenship application had been discussed at the Home Office. "On one occasion I had to summon the Permanent Secretary from the Home Office to correct factual inaccuracies in a press statement that was about to be released."

The comment is understood to refer to a draft press release in Michael Howard's name which said that Mr Wardle himself, not Mr Howard, had instigated a re-examination of the application by Ali Al

Fayed. Mr Wardle insisted that nothing he said should be interpreted as an attack on any fellow MP.

However, Mr Howard and his supporters denied Mr Wardle's version of events. A source close to Mr Howard said that the former Home Secretary had never behaved "inappropriately". He had made clear at the time that Mr Wardle should take the final decision on Ali Al Fayed's citizenship application.

Mr Wardle, who initiated yesterday's short Commons debate on DTI inquiries, said the investigation into the Al Fayed takeover had been "a travesty" and the report should be struck from the record. He claimed that it had been prompted entirely by pressure from the business magnate "Tiny" Rowland.

He said he had no doubt that the Al Fayeds had often "embellished the truth" and that they were prepared to fight "with no holds barred". "And yet, injustice is injustice, no matter how controversial the characters on the receiving end may be."

Nigel Griffiths, the Industry and Consumer Affairs Minister, rejected Mr Wardle's call for a review of the Harrods takeover report.

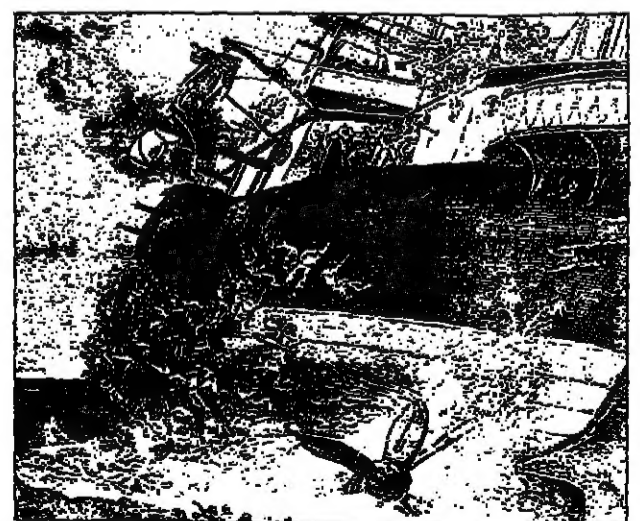
Mohamed Al Fayed said last night that Mr Wardle had undergone a "Dumasque conversion on the road to Knightsbridge". His "revelations" reinforced the case for a public inquiry, he added.

Account of Victorian naval disaster discovered

By Alan Hamilton and John Vincent

AN UNPUBLISHED eyewitness account of the worst Victorian peacetime naval tragedy has surfaced among a pile of papers sent from America for auction in London.

"Intelligence has reached here of a terrible disaster," *The Times* correspondent in Beirut cabled London on June 23, 1893. As the British Mediterranean Fleet exercised off Tripoli in Syria (now Lebanon), Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon issued an inexplicable signal which sent the two ships under his command, his flagship HMS *Victoria* and the warship HMS *Camperdown*, into inevitable collision and massive loss of life. Sir George was heard to exclaim "It is entirely my fault" as the ships bore into each other. The *Victoria's* starboard bow was split open;



An artist's impression, based on an eyewitness account, of the sinking of HMS Victoria in 1893

she capsized and plunged head first to the bottom, sending Sir George and 435 other officers and men to an immediate watery grave. One of 200 survivors was a stoker, James Curran, whose handwritten account of the disaster is expected to make a modest £100 when auctioned at Phillips on June 12.

Curran likens the sinking to the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. "Someone had blundered, and it is blunders such as this that makes wives widows, children orphans, and cost so many of our British blue-

jackets their lives." He tells of seeing a watertight door slam on 100 of his shipmates condemning them to death, and of watching others smashed and killed on the vessel's rolling chocks, sliced to pieces by propellers or dragged under water by the overpowering suction of the sinking ship.

Curran was tossed into the sea on the starboard side, was sucked below several times but, being a strong swimmer, managed to keep afloat while hundreds drowned around him. He was eventually picked up, unconscious.

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If you're a Norwich Union member, you should have received this form, together with a mini-prospectus containing details of the Norwich Union Members' Offer. Here's what the form means, and how to fill it in. If you are in any doubt as to what you should do, please consult your bank manager, solicitor, accountant or other financial adviser.

1. This shows the number of free shares allocated to you on flotation. The number is determined by the size of the policies you held with Norwich Union on the relevant date, and is not alterable.

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4. As a member, you are entitled to apply for shares over and above those allotted to you free, at the Members' Offer Price which will be 25p per share less than the eventual Public Offer Price. If you do wish to apply for extra shares, the minimum amount you can invest is £400, and you may only invest amounts as follows: £400; £600; £800; £1,000; £1,500; £2,000; £2,500; £3,000; £4,000; £5,000; £10,000; £15,000; £20,000. Applications to invest any amount above £20,000 must be in multiples of £10,000, up to a maximum of £100,000. If you do not wish to apply for extra shares, leave this section blank.

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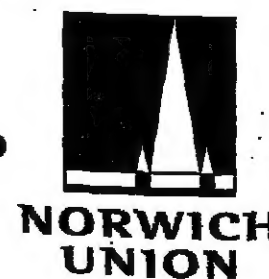
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6. Sign and date the Declaration.

7. Return your form in the reply-paid envelope to arrive no later than 2.00 pm on Tuesday 10th June, 1997. If you have lost your reply envelope you can send your application to The Norwich Union Share Offer, P.O. Box 1000, 71 Queen Street, London EC4N 1SL.

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05/11/2015

Open's old hands beaten by young fingers on buzzer

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

YOUTH prevailed on *University Challenge* last night as the record-breaking mature students of the Open University were defeated in the final by the young Turks of Magdalen College, Oxford.

The Open team, which included 73-year-old Ida Staples and had a combined age of 204, had swept through previous rounds, setting and then breaking a points record. But in the final they were defeated 250-195 by a quartet who were products of state secondary schools.

"Open didn't get many questions wrong, Magdalen were just very quick on the buzzer," Peter Gwyn, the programme's producer, said. "They performed very well throughout the competition. They were not as spectacular as Open but they were always a very, very solid and well-balanced team, and that paid

dividends in the final," Open University, including Ida Staples, the oldest contestant ever, first terrified opponents when, in the first round, they trounced Swansea University 395-85 — the highest score since the series was relaunched. They broke their own record when they annihilated Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School 415-65 in the semi-final and celebrated by taking their broken opponents' night-clubbing.

Jim Adams, the Magdalen captain, said the team had been surprised to beat the Open University. "Given their awesome reputation, it was quite scary. You hear that these are the people who are going to thrash you. By that stage of the competition, most teams know most of the answers — it's just a matter of who is the fastest. I was very

fortunate that the other members of my team were very quick on the buzzer."

Mr Adams added that the secondary education of the team members had played a part when he picked them. "A state school education puts you in a minority at Magdalen and I have to admit it was slightly a factor for me. There's a natural bias towards people who are a bit more like yourself."

The team members were all undergraduates: Jim Adams, 21, reading mathematics and philosophy; Alison Reeves, 21, history; Gwilym Thear, 21, English; and Colin Andrews, 26, a mature student who was unemployed before taking courses at a further education college and winning a place to read classics.

They had a combined age less than half that of their opponents. Mrs Staples, of



The Open team: record makers and record breakers, but beaten at the last. Ida Staples, 73, was *University Challenge*'s oldest contestant



The winners from Magdalen College, Oxford, were undergraduates from state secondary schools

THE QUESTIONS

Questions Open University got wrong

Which movement took its name from the Latinised name of the Dutch theologian Jakob Harmensen and grew in the early 17th century as a reaction against the strict tenets of Calvinism? *Arminianism*

What word derives from a term for the masks used by Etruscan mimics and was used by Carl Jung to refer to the personality that an individual projects to others, as opposed to the authentic self? *Persona*

Name the American minimalist artist, born in 1930 and often seen as a precursor of the pop art movement, who produced a series of paintings based on the American flag? *Jasper Johns*

What is the name of the inlet which was constructed at the northern end of Mainland, in the Shetlands, to handle North Sea oil? *Suðavík*

Questions that Magdalen College got right
According to Genesis, Noah's Ark was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high — so what, in cubic cubits, was its volume? *450,000 cubic cubits*
How has the former Marie-Christine Von Reibnitz been known since she married into the British Royal Family in 1978? *Princess Alexandra of Kent*
Which priest was executed in the Tower in 1645 after spending four years there as a prisoner? *Archbishop William Laud*



Together again: Joyce and Pierrepont, his hangman, are both shortlisted for a plaque

War veterans say Haw-Haw plaque plan is an insult

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A COUNCIL'S inclusion of the Second World War traitor Lord Haw-Haw on a list of suggested commemorative plaques has provoked strong protests from war veterans.

William Joyce, alias Lord Haw-Haw, broadcast propaganda for Nazi Germany on the radio and, in his lisp, praised the might of Hitler's forces and taunted the families of servicemen fighting on foreign fronts.

His compelling greeting, "Germany calling, Germany calling", was listened to by millions. After the war, Joyce was tried for treason and was executed. His is among 27 suggested names for the council's blue plaques, aimed at "honouring famous events and people" at a cost of £180 each. They were due to be discussed by Oldham Borough Council's environmental services committee.

Others on the list include John Wesley, Eric Sykes, Dora Bryan and Charlie Chaplin. Sir Winston Churchill already has a blue plaque on Oldham Town Hall. By coincidence, Albert Pierrepont, the last hangman in Britain, could also have his name on a plaque. It was Pierrepont, the landlord of the Help the Poor Struggler public house in Hollinwood, who slipped the noose over Joyce's head in 1946.

Joyce, who claimed a British passport despite an Irish-American father, lived for a time as a boy in Brompton Street in the town where, according to his biographer, he became a "passionately patriotic English schoolboy". He later joined the Fascist movement and at the outbreak of war fled to Germany, where he used his skills as an orator in an attempt to undermine

the Allied war effort. Chadwick Middleton, a former Far East prisoner of war, and secretary of the Oldham Liaison Association of Ex-Servicemen, said: "It is an affront to everyone who served in the Second World War."

"Lord Haw-Haw was a traitor. There is no reason to give him publicity. Some people see him as a figure of fun but he wasn't funny to the British during the war. Some of them were terrified by his claims that this place or that place would be the next to be bombed by Germany."

Thomas Fitzpatrick, 73, secretary of the Oldham and Rochdale Royal Artillery Association, said: "He was a Nazi through and through. What do the council want to go and do something like this for? We should be commemorating heroes, not traitors. Ex-servicemen in Oldham won't stand for that going up on one of the town's walls. It would be torn down in minutes."

Joseph Wray, 71, of the Manchester branch of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment Association, said: "Lord Haw-Haw should be forgotten."

Harold Buckley, 44, a Brompton Street resident, said he was not prepared to have the plaque in his street. His father, also called Harold, was wounded at Arras. "If my father was still alive, he would fight this with everything he had," he said.

John Batty, leader of Oldham council, intervened last night in the controversy and said he would take steps to kill off any plan to acknowledge Lord Haw-Haw in Oldham. He said: "It would be wholly inappropriate, not to say offensive, to even consider Joyce for recognition in this way." Mr Batty apologised for any offence caused.

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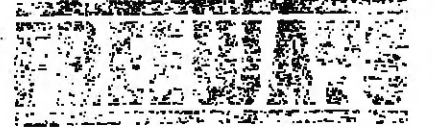
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Odd couple will make even odder bedfellows

THE cynics say it will be a marriage of convenience but on their third date in this election Ireland's odd couple were at pains to stress that theirs was a meeting of minds.

Bertie Ahern and Mary Harney, the leaders of the two main opposition parties, have been thrown together by events, and during the strains of this campaign the strains have shown. Yesterday, however, they invited the world to admire the fruits of their union: a shadow budget designed to spread the benefits of Ireland's phenomenal growth by cutting taxes.

A few balloons held shakily aloft by sweat-soaked supporters turned Bewley's coffee house in Dublin from tourist trap into media centre. More carefully packaged, hot air from Mr Ahern and Ms Harney turned their two, very different, parties into a principled crusade. Mr Ahern's Fianna Fail are the party of the old Republic — populist, nationalist and corporatist. Ms Harney's Progressive Democrats are the party of new Ireland — yuppie, metropolitan and liberal. They have, however, coalesced on a

The strains have been showing in Bertie and Mary's marriage of convenience, writes **Michael Gove**. Yesterday, they invited the world to admire the fruits of their union

broadly Conservative platform, emphasising tax cuts, zero tolerance for crime and a "family friendly" social policy.

The polls, which have not moved significantly, suggest they are favourites to form the next government. About 15 per cent of voters have still to make up their minds and almost as many could vote for fringe or independent candidates but the odds still favour a Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat government, just.

Although the incumbents, a rainbow coalition of the liberal Fine Gael party, Labour and post-Marxist Democratic Left have presided over Europe's fastest growing economy, they have found, like the Tories, that the voters are apparently unwilling to show gratitude for a boom they feel they built themselves.

Certainly, Dublin's lunch-time drinkers were in the mood to loosen their belts a

notch in yesterday's sun and the feeling that the time has come to spread the state's largesse permeates political conversations. One Progressive Democrat supporter sipping his drink in the shadow of Trinity College, Dublin, commented: "Top rate tax at 48 pence is just too high. This country is doing well enough to afford a cut." If the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrats' tax-cutting proposals do secure victory then that would reverse the trend in the European Union which has seen socialist victories in the United Kingdom and France put the Left into government in 13 of the 15 member states.

However, the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat coalition, despite the best efforts of the opposition to paint them as Irish Thatcherites, still fit comfortably in the European mainstream. Earlier this week Ms Harney rebutted an alle-

gation of right-wingery in a televised debate with Dick Spring, the Labour leader, by citing scripture — Tony Blair's manifesto commitments to reform welfare and be tough on crime — to prove she was the truer disciple of new Labour.

Progressive Democrat spin-doctors, altogether more approachable than their new Labour equivalent, despair, however, of convincing the media that they are not alien interlopers in Irish politics from the planet Portillo. One argued: "With a decline in the Church's influence in politics, the moral high ground has been occupied by the parties furthest out on the left. They exercise disproportionate influence in the rainbow coalition government and Dublin's news rooms." He exaggerates, but not grotesquely.

The political consensus in Ireland is still well to left of the United Kingdom. Industries privatised long ago in the United Kingdom still nestle in the Irish state embrace. When the Progressive Democrats floated the possibility of job cuts in the public sector, their kite was shot down by their Fianna Fail allies for fear of



Harney and Ahern, favourites to form the next government, at the launch of their shadow Budget yesterday

upsetting the delicate balance of patronage on which the older party relies.

The tensions between the two parties revealed then have also surfaced on welfare reform and the peace process, with Fianna Fail forced to tone down Progressive Democrat positions. Before the election

was called, the Progressive Democrats' eight-strong parliamentary contingent were accused of wielding disproportionate influence over Fianna Fail; but, as the campaign has developed, the PD tail, far from wagging the dog, has often been sat on.

Earlier this week, Dick

Spring revealed that he had been warned by Mary Harney before he went into alliance with Fianna Fail in 1992 that he would have "a very sorry time". He did, storming out of coalition with them on a point of honour to create an alternative government. If Ms Har-

ney finds herself in government with Fianna Fail after tomorrow she should enjoy the honour of being Ireland's first female Taoiseach (Deputy Prime Minister). She may also find out how uncomfortable it is being in bed with a much bigger partner.

Sleaze factor fails to stop fightback by ex-minister

BY AUDREY MAGEE

MICHAEL LOWRY, the former Irish Minister for Transport, refuses to be drawn on the parallels being drawn between his fight for re-election and the fall of the Tory MP Neil Hamilton.

The comparisons, however, are unavoidable. Mr Lowry has been at the centre of Ireland's own sleaze furore and his rival candidate is — like Martin Bell — a former television journalist.

The crucial difference is that Mr Lowry is expected to hang on to his seat in North Tipperary, where he commands huge public support. He is standing for election as an independent after Fine Gael removed him from the party ticket over claims that he failed to pay tax on more than £300,000 given to him by the supermarket tycoon Ben Dunne.

Mr Dunne, whose alleged payments to politicians, including Charles Haughey, the former Prime Minister, are the subject of a tribunal, is claimed to have paid more than £200,000 for an extension to Mr Lowry's home and deposited £105,000 into an offshore account for the former minister.

The trials of the minister worsened when Irish newspapers carried details of an extra-marital affair, a subject not treated lightly in Irish society. But, despite it all, Mr Lowry is still on course to win a seat in tomorrow's election to the three-seat constituency of Tipperary North and may even top the poll. If he does, he could yield great influence in the formation of the next government.

The government coalition of Fine Gael, Labour, and the Democratic Left is fighting a close battle with the opposition coalition of Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats. Independents like Lowry could be vital in securing an overall majority.

Mr Lowry is a former senior member and fundraiser for Fine Gael and was a close personal friend of John Bruton, the Prime Minister. The decision to oust Mr Lowry from the party has caused a rift in Fine Gael support in Tipperary North. About half the local party supporters back Mr Lowry, leaving the national party to take over and organise an alternative candidate. Tom Berkery was selected but despite best efforts by him and his party — including the allocation of £2.5 million to projects in Tipperary North in the past three weeks — he appears likely to lose. It will be

the first time in 20 years that Fine Gael has been without a seat in the constituency.

The predicted outcome on the streets of Thurles, Mr Lowry's home town, is that the "three Michaels" will be elected: Mr Lowry and Michael O'Kennedy, of Fianna Fail, and the sitting TD or MP, Michael Smith. However, the journalist Kathleen O'Meara is charging up on the outside flank and may save the day for the government parties.

The Irish version of Martin Bell, Miss O'Mara appears on course to win through vote transfers and may take the third seat instead of Mr Smith. Ms O'Mara, 37, a former broadcasting journalist with RTE, who moved back to her home town of Roscrea in time for the election, said: "It has been going very well in the past few days



Lowry: ousted by Fine Gael as party candidate

and I think I'm in there with a chance of a seat. I'm not wearing a white suit though. It's impossible to keep clean in this work."

Richard Bruton, brother of the Taoiseach and Minister for Enterprise and Employment, was in Tipperary North yesterday to give support to the coalition candidates, Mr Berkery and Ms O'Meara. He said that despite the risks to Fine Gael, the decision to oust Mr Lowry was the right choice. "The public would not have accepted anything else," he said. "People are expecting high standards in public office and from a party like Fine Gael."

Mr Lowry, who spent the day in private meetings with constituents yesterday, has huge backing in Thurles despite his questionable tax and marital affairs. He has worked furiously for his region. In the 1980s he devised a scheme to clear the £1.3 million debt held by the Gaelic Athletic Association and has organised an annual rock concert in the town.

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Tories make hard work of an already difficult job

The other day I remarked to one of the Tory leadership candidates that next Tuesday's first round was essentially a beauty contest, to establish MP's first preferences, before the serious business began. This, he joked, must mean that the second round was an ugly contest, so he should win. The candidate had a point. The Tory election rules are perverse in the extreme.

The rules have mainly been used to get rid of unpopular leaders, as in 1975, 1990 and, unsuccessfully, in 1995. The only previous occasion when the sitting leader has not been in the first round was 1965 when Sir Alec Douglas-Home stood down. In 1965, there were just three candidates, only two of whom, Sir Edward Heath and Reginald Maudling, had a serious chance. At present, there

are at least three possible winners, Kenneth Clarke, William Hague and Peter Lilley, out of five first round candidates.

Mr Clarke, of course, starts with the advantage of being the most prominent and most popular candidate, both with the public and among Tory supporters. Yesterday's sensible decision by Stephen Dorrell to stand down will matter more in terms of headlines than in directly affecting the votes of MPs. It is a myth that candidates command blocks of voters that can be ordered this way or that. MPs support candidates for varying reasons of personal loyalty and past service as well as ideology. It is highly unlikely that all, or even most, of Mr Dorrell's perhaps half-dozen supporters will now back Mr Clarke. But it does reinforce his position as

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

the sole candidate of the Centre-Left.

By contrast, the position on the Centre-Right is messy and the rules do not make it easy to sort out. After all, anyone standing in the first round can also stand in the second round, when other candidates can join in (though they probably will not on this occasion). This determines which two candidates will fight the run-off. But there is no formal process of elimination, or rating of candidates in order with the votes of the lower ones being redistributed. It is likely that the candidate coming fifth next Tuesday, probably John Redwood, will drop out, but there is no reason why the one in fourth place should do so —

especially as the second, third and fourth-place candidates could easily come within a handful of votes of each other. If the second or third-place candidates do less well than expected, the fourth place one — say, Michael Howard — may calculate, or at any rate claim, that he will pick up votes on the second round and could even move up into second place then.

The common assumption is that the second round battle will be about which centre-right candidate is best placed to stop Mr Clarke. That is based on the belief that he will gain enough votes in the first round — say 45 to 50 — to establish momentum as the clear favourite, and the man to stop. But if he fails to gain that level of support, the contest could turn into a battle of stopping the candidate from the Right.

But a second-round battle between four candidates is not a clear-cut means of sorting out preferences. The candidate — say William Hague — who would be most MP's second preference might come third in the second round behind Peter Lilley and would therefore be excluded from the run-off. Conversely, if Mr Lilley is excluded, all his supporters may not automatically switch behind Mr Hague. The final choice for MPs whose candidate has not made it to the final round will come down to a balance between suspicion of Mr Clarke's views on Europe and recognition of his ability to revive the Tories' electoral fortunes with the public. But the Tories' strange rules unnecessarily complicate this process.

PETER RIDDELL

Major accuses Blair of breaking promise over devolution Bill

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN MAJOR forced Tony Blair onto the defensive yesterday over the Government's plans for devolution.

In a combative performance at Prime Ministers' Questions, Mr Major accused Mr Blair of reneging on a promise to publish the Scottish devolution Bill before a referendum on the changes is held, intervening an unprecedented five times in the second of the new-style Question Times. Mr Major was cheered by Tory MPs as he accused Mr Blair of arrogance and contempt for Parliament.

He claimed that Mr Blair had promised last month that the devolution Bill would be published before the referendum this autumn.

However, the Government is promising to publish only a White Paper — a formal policy document — on devolution before the referendum. The Tories believe that voters should be asked to consider the actual Bill, rather than a policy document that can be changed later.

Mr Major quoted a response Mr Blair gave to a question during the Queen's Speech debate last month. Asked by Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, when the Bill would be published, Mr Blair told MPs: "Of course, the Bill will be

published in time for the referendum."

Last night government sources said that Mr Blair had made a slip of the tongue and had meant to say that the White Paper would be published before the referendum.

But in rowdy exchanges in the Commons, Mr Major asked Mr Blair if he had changed his mind. "And if you have changed your mind, why didn't you have the courtesy to come and tell the House? The distinction between the White Paper and the Bill will be well understood by the House and you. Wasn't it a matter of trust that you told us?"

Mr Blair said that the position was clear. "The White Paper proposals... will be put to a referendum of the Scottish people. That is entirely sensible since it is only after the referendum has given an affirmative answer that it is sensible to draw up the Bill, so we have the details of the Bill properly debated in this House. That is plainly the sensible way to proceed."

He added: "We said right through the election that the White Paper proposals will be there so that everybody in Scotland and Wales knows precisely what is being contemplated."

Mr Major accused Mr Blair of "both wriggling and wob-

bling". He said: "Isn't the truth that the details of this policy are still in such a muddle that you cannot yet give detailed instructions to the draftsmen?"

"Why don't you admit that you made a mistake in the past and the Bill isn't ready? Why don't you admit you've been caught with your fingers in the till, oratorically. You promised the Bill and you can't deliver the Bill."

The Referendums (Scotland and Wales) Bill was expected to complete its final Commons stages last night before heading to the Lords.

□ Scots will vote in favour of devolution by a ratio of three to one, according to a System Three poll published in *The Herald* yesterday. It is the same opinion poll to use the Government proposes to ask in September: I am/am not in favour of a Scottish Parliament. I am/am not in favour of tax raising powers.

Sixty-four per cent voted for home rule with 21 per cent against and 15 per cent undecided. But there was less support for a parliament with tax-raising powers: 53 per cent for, 28 per cent against and 19 per cent undecided.

More than 1,000 voters in 40 Scottish constituencies were canvassed.



Presidential style: Cherie and Tony Blair on their way to the state opening of Parliament

Labour accused over 'First Lady'

A TORY MP provoked uproar in the Commons yesterday when he attacked government ministers for describing Tony Blair's wife as Britain's First Lady (James Landale writes).

To Labour cries of "shame", David Wilshire, MP for Spelthorne, urged the Prime Minister to tell his ministers to stop what he called "this arrogant practice".

Mr Blair denied that his wife, Cherie, was described as

the First Lady and insisted that politicians' wives should be kept out of politics.

Mr Wilshire asked: "When President Clinton and a real First Lady had dinner with you last Thursday rather than at Buckingham Palace, did you take that opportunity to explain why Members of Her Majesty's Government have taken to referring to the wife of the British Prime Minister as Britain's First Lady?"

The unarticulated implication was that only the Queen could be referred to as the "First Lady".

As one Labour MP shouted "cheap and nasty," Mr Blair replied that the Tory party had clearly not improved in Opposition. He said he knew of no one referring to his wife as the First Lady and added: "In relation to insulting the wives of politicians whether they are here or abroad, the more they are kept out of the whole thing the better."

Meacher attacks 'selfish' oil giants

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE Junior Environment Minister, Michael Meacher, attacked some of the big oil and coal companies yesterday for undermining efforts to tackle global warming. He accused the Global Climate Coalition, which includes Texaco and Exxon, of putting their own interests before the planet by spreading disinformation and peddling dubious science that says global warming is a myth.

Speaking in advance of the GS and United Nations special general assembly later this month where global warming is high on the agenda, Mr Meacher said climate change posed real threats that "we cannot ignore and cannot be allowed to ignore". Britain will be pressing the United States, the world's biggest polluter, whose attempts to reduce emissions have spectacularly failed, to show more leadership and commitment.

Mr Meacher, speaking at a meeting on climate change organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature, said the companies in the coalition faced becoming the industrial dinosaurs of the 21st century. "In the long term those companies may find that they will miss out on the commercial opportunities that will arise from new technologies and other developments," he said.

Mr Meacher contrasted the stance of many oil and coal companies with that of BP, whose group chief executive John Browne recently accepted that action to curb global warming was prudent. BP, which last year withdrew from the Coalition, has also announced plans to boost its production of solar power which the minister applauded.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: Trade and Industry questions; Education (Schools) Bill, remaining stages; backbench debate on Orkney Hospital, Thurrock. In the Lords: Wireless Telegraphy Bill, second reading; Special Immigration Appeals Commission Bill, second reading; debate on planning inquiry rules.

Would-be Tory MPs face new hurdle

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Tories yesterday effectively sacked their 600-strong pool of potential parliamentary candidates as part of an overhaul of the way the party chooses its MPs.

Party chiefs "terminated" the current list of approved candidates and urged them to reapply under tougher rules designed to prove their commitment to the party. Many candidates have been on the list for ten years and Tory officials are keen to open the way for people from a wider range of society, especially women and members of the ethnic minorities.

Potential MPs have to get on the approved list before they can stand for selection in constituencies. The list has never been gutted in this way. Under the new process, the list will also be reviewed at the end of each Parliament so that weak candidates can be "culled", officials said. A new director of the candidates department will be employed to carry out the review.

Under the scheme, some high-calibre candidates on the old list will be put on the new list. Others will be reinterviewed or face a full selection board again. Some will be rejected automatically. New candidates will be judged on their "calibre, record and commitment" to the party. This means potential candidates will have to show how much work they have done on the ground, during and after the election. Local party chairmen and agents will be asked to report on how well candidates on the list who stood at the election fought for their seat.

The changes were agreed by Tory Central Office with the voluntary wing which represents Tory associations. Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, said: "It has become clear that the approved list has become filled up with a number of people who no longer seriously wish to pursue a parliamentary career."

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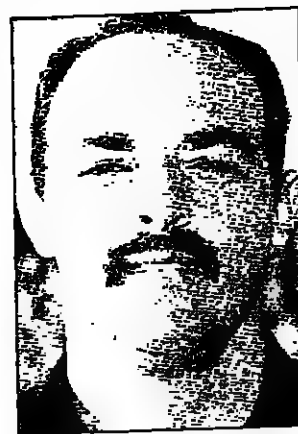
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Grobbelaar: fixing charge

Jury told to forget football loyalties

BY LIN JENKINS

POTENTIAL jurors in the retrial of three footballers and a businessman accused of match-fixing were told yesterday not to allow footballing loyalties to influence the result.

The four women and eight men who were selected at Winchester Crown Court to try the case were given strict instructions not to be influenced by the fame of John Fashanu, the former Aston Villa striker and now host of the TV show *Gladiators*. Bruce Grobbelaar, the former Liverpool and Wimbledon goalkeeper, and Hans Segers, the former Wimbledon keeper. The fourth defendant is Heng Suan Lim, a Malaysian businessman.

Mr Justice McCullough told the jurors that they must not come into contact with the defendants or their families and for that purpose would leave court by a separate entrance at different times.

He also said that the jury must not speculate on why a verdict and must have no contact with any members of the previous jury.

Fashanu, 33, Segers, 34, and Mr Lim, 30, deny conspiring to give and corruptly to accept money to influence or attempt to influence the outcome of football matches between February 1991 and November 1994. Grobbelaar, 39, Fashanu and Mr Lim deny an identical charge between November 1992 and November 1994. Grobbelaar also denies accepting £2,000 as an inducement for match-fixing.

Editor faces charge of inciting anglers to kill cormorants

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER editor of the *Angling Times*, Britain's best-selling fishing newspaper, is to appear in court on two charges of incitement to kill cormorants.

It is thought to be the first time that anyone has been prosecuted for inciting an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. If guilty, he faces a maximum fine of £8,000.

The charges arise out of an article on December 4 last year in the weekly newspaper, which has a circulation of 85,000 among Britain's three million anglers. The article reported the activities of an unnamed fishery owner who had taken the law into his own hands. Beside a front-page headline, "These Birds Must Be Killed", the paper carried a photograph of a masked man with a gun next to four dead birds.

Keith Higginbottom, editor from July 1991 until May 8 this year, has been summoned before Peterborough magistrates on July 11. News of the prosecution broke as the paper celebrated a decision by Brussels to end the protection which cormorants enjoy under European Union law.

The Brussels decision will not affect the protected status of cormorants in Britain, but will intensify demands by the angling lobby for national law

to be changed. Fisheries managers want to be able to shoot the birds on sight.

Cambridgeshire police said yesterday that Mr Higginbottom had been charged with "incitement to commit the intentional taking, killing, injuring of any wild bird", and "incitement to commit the use of prohibited articles and methods to kill birds".

The *Angling Times* said it was very surprised by the charges. "We have never urged the public to take the law into its own hands, but have campaigned to have the law changed so that appropriate measures can be taken."

It added: "The *Angling*

Times took the view, and still supports the view, that cormorants are doing major ecological damage to European fish stocks and the aquatic environment in general and that something must be done to limit their numbers."

It said Mr Higginbottom's departure as editor was based purely on the offer of a better position.

The Brussels decision was taken under the Birds Directive. The British representative voted with the majority to end the protected status of the cormorant.

The decision affects only the main continental sub-species of the bird, *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*, which is different from the coastal cormorant found in Britain, *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*. The continental bird has increased from 5,000 pairs in 1979 to more than 100,000 today and is no longer considered endangered.

Cormorants have taken thousands of fish from Lord Lloyd-Webber's lake at Sydmonton Court, on the Hampshire-Berkshire border near Newbury. Just 250 carp remain out of 7,500. Fishermen in Berkshire say the cormorants are being driven inland because coastal waters are polluted and over-fished.

Higginbottom: has since left the *Angling Times*

Leading article, page 23



Anglers blame the cormorant, a legally protected bird, for damaging fish stocks

British Museum plans to scare up support

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE bandaged mummies which, according to horror films, creak open their sarcophagi at night and lurched down the corridors of the British Museum may have to watch where they step in future. The floor around their coffins could be covered with children who have taken up the museum's challenge to spend a night sleeping in the Egyptian galleries.

Then again, youngsters asleep under an Aztec skull in the Museum of Mankind could be given a shove by the ghost of a 19th-century clerk who wanders the corridors pushing people who get in his way. If they can get to sleep over the noise of ghostly footsteps and the creak of the front door opening when everybody knows it's locked, they might be wakened by a young boy who asks for directions to a rectory that has not existed since the 1960s.

The haunting "Sleepovers" plan to have children bring their sleeping bags to the museum has been dreamt up to attract young people to join the British Museum Society. The cost of a night beside a mummy is £20 for children, £18 for adults, and the first one is being held in November.

Surprisingly, there are no ghosts associated with exhibits most seem to be former members of staff. "No mummies or ancient Roman soldiers," said one scholar. On the whole, the museum's ghosts tend not to be adventurous: they primarily haunt the basements and attics, although several members of staff have also seen an elderly gentleman and a woman who walk along an inner road. It is thought that he is a former keeper with his wife or daughter. The spooky part of the story is that they are seen only from the calves upwards — from the level at which the road used to be before it was raised.

The Society can be contacted through Sarah Carthew, Head of British Museum Society, Great Russell St, London, WC1.

Fall in pollution cases could be linked to drought

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A WATER company is prosecuted for polluting rivers and waterways once a fortnight, the Environment Agency said yesterday.

Last year, however, the number of pollution cases in England and Wales from agriculture, heavy industry and water firms fell for the first time since 1989, says its report, *Water Pollution Incidents in England and Wales 1996*.

The improvement is echoed in another report, also published today, showing an increase in the number of

beaches meeting the prestigious European Blue Flag standard. The Tidy Britain Group said that 38 beaches could now fly the blue flag compared with 18 last year.

The Environment Agency said that while the drop in waterway pollution incidents was welcome, the improvements may be due in part to the drought, with less pollution being washed into rivers and streams. The agency also remains concerned about the damage caused to fresh waters by water and sewage com-

panies. "During the year there were between 25 and 30 prosecutions of water companies for pollution," the agency said. The number of incidents relating to the water industry and which require investigation by the agency is running at one a day.

Many of the more serious incidents, in which large numbers of fish die, a river becomes unpleasant for boaters and walkers, and wildlife is harmed, involve discharge of untreated sewage or excessive levels of chemicals from

treatment works. The agency yesterday urged water companies to improve automatic monitoring systems at treatment works.

Last year, there were 32,409 pollution incidents reported to the agency, compared with 35,891 in 1995, a drop of 10 per cent. The agency said public-awareness campaigns, particularly on farms, had helped to reduce some types of incidents. However, pollution cases from lorries are on the increase, including spillages of milk, beer and diesel.

BLUE FLAG BEACHES

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An object one 25th the size of Earth may force astronomers to rethink history of our solar system

Scientists find new planet beyond orbit of Neptune

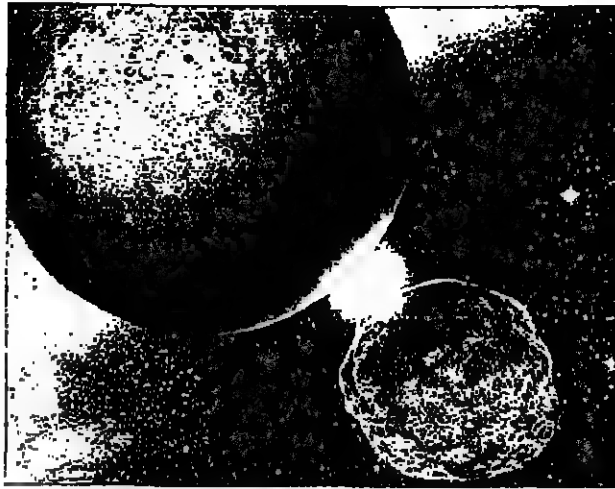
By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

ASTRONOMERS have discovered a mini-planet at the edge of the solar system which may change our thinking on how the planets evolved.

More than 300 miles in diameter, the planetesimal is the brightest object to be found beyond the orbit of Neptune since the discovery of Pluto in 1930.

Given the designation 1996 TL₆₆, the new object is probably one of many according to its discoverers, Jane Luu of the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and colleagues. They say it is the first example of a new class of objects scattered throughout the outer solar system, whose total mass is between two and eight times greater than the mass of those in the Kuiper Belt, a swarm of bodies moving around the Sun in orbits beyond Neptune.

If so, the finding has implications for the history of the



The object is the brightest discovered beyond Neptune since Pluto, seen with its moon, was found in 1930

solar system because it suggests that the primordial mass of material spinning around the Sun, from which the planets condensed, must have been much more extensive and massive than previously assumed.

The mini-planet's highly el-

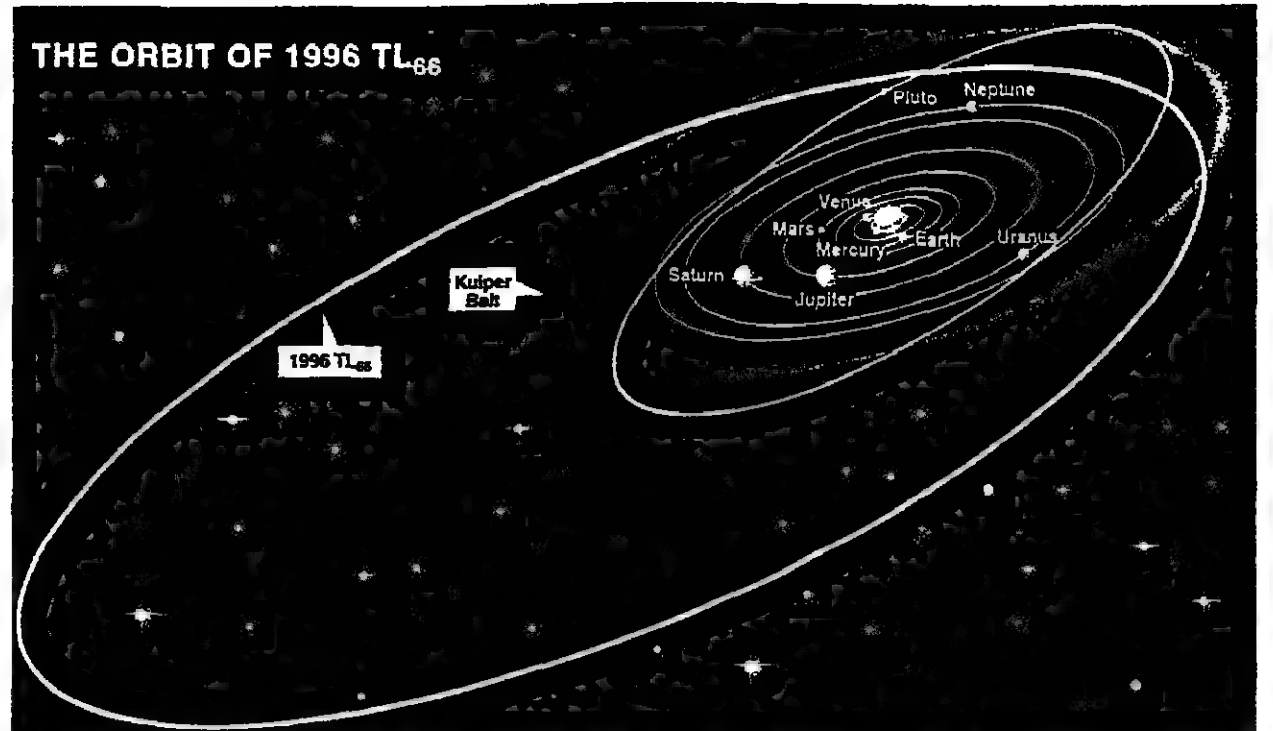
llyptical orbit means that it spends most of its time way beyond the outer limits of the solar system, where it is too small to be visible. It can be seen only during the part of its orbit when it is nearest to the Sun. At its closest approach it is 35 times as far from the Sun

as the Earth is, placing it between Neptune and Pluto. It is roughly a fifth as large as Pluto, or one 25th the size of the Earth.

The object was found using a sensitive detector mounted on a telescope at the University of Hawaii, and a computer program to examine successive images of the same region and detect moving objects. It was found after scanning only a very small area, suggesting, the team says in *Nature* magazine, that "unless we are impossibly lucky, it is merely the first detected of a larger population of similar bodies".

There are likely to be at least 800 such objects and perhaps as many as 6,400, the team calculates, most of which will be too small to be visible.

The origin of the object appears to have been the Kuiper Belt. David Hewitt and Dr Luu, who are both involved in the discovery, found the first of the Kuiper objects in 1992. But that object, and about another three dozen



that have been found subsequently, occupy near-circular orbits around the Sun.

Even further out, beyond the limits of the solar system, there is a second belt of objects, the Oort cloud, from which comets originate.

This new planetesimal belongs to neither of these two classes. The team speculates

that it may originally have been in the Kuiper Belt, but was perturbed by a close pass by Neptune or by another planetesimal, and placed in its present eccentric orbit.

The new object will be given a name, chosen by the discoverers, once it has been clearly established that it is new, and not merely a new sighting of a

previously identified object. The names are judged by a nine-person panel of professional astronomers called the Small Bodies Names Committee of the International Astronomical Union.

While many discoverers choose to name minor planets after themselves or figures from literature or mythology,

other more exotic names are not frowned upon. A minor planet found in 1973 is called Pele, for example, while others are called Nefertiti, Don Quixote, Magellan and Pochontas. A dozen have been named after pop stars: all The Beatles are included, as well as Eric Clapton, Mike Oldfield and Frank Zappa.

Experts say giant lasers can trigger nuclear weapons

By Nigel Hawkes

GIANT lasers powerful enough to set off nuclear bombs may be a threat to world peace, scientists have claimed.

Lasers being developed by France and America may lead to devices able to ignite thermonuclear explosions without the need for a fission trigger such as uranium-235, according to two Nobel prizewinners.

The work, at the American National Ignition Facility, and its French equivalent, the Megajoules laser near Bordeaux, could be used to develop more sophisticated nuclear weapons, they say.

Dr Sebastian Pesse, a former Director of the UK's Culham Laboratory, told the Institute of Physics journal *Opto & Laser Europe*: "They have the potential for developing weapons. I am worried that hitherto it has not been possible to make fusion explosions other than with a uranium-235 trigger. If you can make explosions without a fission trigger, there could be a development of a new range of fearful things."

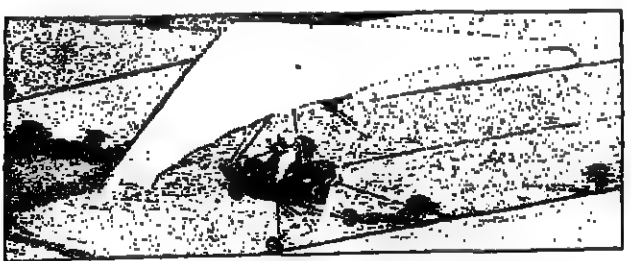
The US facility, in California, will consist of 192 separate laser beams that can be concentrated on pellets made from deuterium and tritium, forms of hydrogen. It will be able to achieve such enormous temperatures and pressures that the atoms will fuse together, as in a hydrogen bomb.

The French device will have 240 beams and, like the American one, is designed for research into nuclear fusion. The teams say the devices will enable research to continue to ensure the effectiveness of nuclear weapons without the need for actual tests.

Both have a peaceful application, since they may provide a way of making fusion power controllable. But Dr Richard Garwin, an IBM scientist and weapons expert who has co-written a book on the subject, told *OLE* the facilities were "far more relevant to the maintenance of technical expertise and interest among weapons designers than they are to the preservation of safe and reliable weapons of existing types".

Professor Joseph Rotblat, British Nobel Peace Prize winner, says: "The public's attention should be drawn to this military aspect and a campaign started to prevent it."

Both lasers will have beams up to 200 metres long and an experimental chamber the size of a four-storey house, so the idea of using them to trigger a nuclear bomb appears impractical. But lessons learnt might be applied to much more compact devices. If they became practical, it would make the spread of nuclear weapons much easier, because it would no longer be necessary to enrich uranium to create a fission trigger.



The two microflight clubs use the same runway

Rival flying clubs hit by turbulence

By Paul Wilkinson

RIVAL flyers are fighting for the skies over an airfield once used to train Spitfire pilots for the Battle of Britain. The runway has now been divided down the middle so the two factions can take off and land independently.

The dispute stems from a split three years ago in the Northumbrian Microlights Club. The two sides have not spoken since Steve Clareheugh, the club founder, left in 1994 and set up a club with the same name a few yards away.

The old club, renamed Eshott Flying Club, after the airfield in Northumberland, has even dismissed members who joined the new rival. Eshott's fliers refuse to acknowledge Mr Clareheugh as they taxi on parallel runways they taxi apart. Members of 20 yards apart. Members of the rival clubs who have known each other since childhood no longer communicate.

In the latest incident, Eshott has objected to Castle Morpeth Council over Northumbrian's application for permanent permission to fly from the divided runway.

saying that a shared runway is unsafe. The British Micro-light Aircraft Association is now trying to bring them together. Jim Bell, its chief executive, who wants to call in an independent arbitrator, said: "I would be happy if the problems up there did not exist. We are looking into this question of memberships being terminated."

Mr Clareheugh said: "The whole thing has become ridiculous. Lifelong friendships are being broken up. People have been leaving Eshott to come to me and they don't like it."

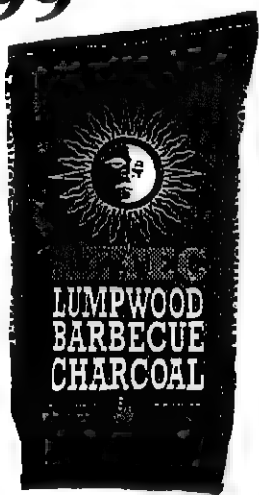
Frank Godfrey is one of seven Eshott fliers with joint membership who have been told their loyalty to the rival club had created a conflict of interest and membership would not be renewed unless they quit Northumbrian.

Ken Southam, 64, the Eshott chairman, said: "People cannot support him and be a member of the club opposing him. Having two clubs so close is unsafe. We have no objection to another airfield in Northumberland."

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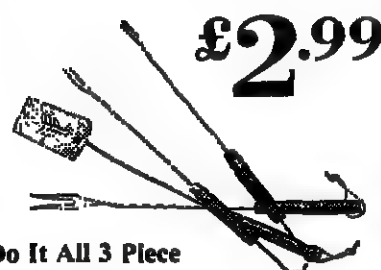
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THE WHITEHALL REVOLUTION

The Ministry of Agriculture

Government is doing to fulfil its pledge to bring a fresh approach to Whitehall and the big departments of state

Ploughing a new furrow

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE
CORRESPONDENT

JACK CUNNINGHAM has promised to reform the Ministry of Agriculture from the secretive and out-of-touch department that he believes it has become.

"What I see here is a department which has not moved with the times, which has been for a variety of reasons rather embattled and inward-looking and not consumer or user friendly," he said. "I am determined to change all that."

It would not be the first time that a new Agriculture Minister has breezed in promising to put consumers first and to stir up the feather-bedded world of farming. Most retire hurt or else go native, a fate that could still overtake Dr Cunningham.

One of new Labour's most seasoned old hands, Dr Cunningham was not an obvious choice for the agriculture job. He had been expecting National Heritage, which he had shadowed for the past two years. But he was dismayed to inherit the domain of the hapless Douglas Hogg, he does not show it.

He has thrown himself into his job with enthusiasm. Apart from taking time off to watch his favourite team, Newcastle United, beat Arsenal at Highbury on the day of his appointment, he has "not



Jack Cunningham promises to open ministry doors to consumers and farmers alike

stopped working". Between shuttling to and from Brussels to discuss fish and beef, he has abolished nine regional advisory panels, consisting mostly of farmers, which had existed in one form or another since the Second World War.

The decision was taken without consulting the National Farmers' Union, whose president, Sir David Naish, was too surprised to do more than blurt plaintively about the "loss of this useful channel of communication". Dr Cunningham saw the panels as

relics of the cosy relationship between the ministry and farmers which he wants to destroy. "I want a more direct, open and accessible ministry, for consumers and farmers alike, and for all those who use, live and work in the countryside," he said. "This can best be achieved through direct contact with departmental Ministers."

Dr Cunningham has told his three juniors, Jeff Rooker, Elliot Morley and Lord

Donoghue, to cultivate their own sources of information and opinion, assigning each to a different region.

Dr Cunningham plans to put a consumer representative on each of the myriad scientific committees that advise the ministry, and promises to publish promptly all the advice he gets. Officials have been set to work on a "mission statement" and on a new name for the ministry, to reflect the more open and less farmer-driven culture that Dr

Cunningham aims to promote. He has been MP since 1970, representing a mainly rural and farming constituency in Cumbria, and has little time for his party's anti-hunting zealots. "The Government has no policy on hunting," he said. "If a Bill were introduced, it would be a matter for a free vote."

The most ambitious project on his agenda is establishing an independent Food Standards Agency to take over much of the ministry's work in ensuring food safety. He says that the only reason it was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech is that the blueprint for the new body, a report by Professor Philip James of the Rowett Research Institute, was not received until the day Mr Blair entered No 10.

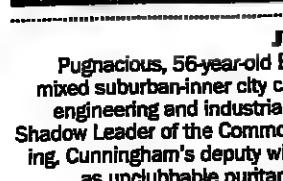
"We accept the broad thrust of the report and there will be a completely freestanding, independent agency with executive powers," he said. "Consultation will be completed later this month and there will be a White Paper and draft legislation by the autumn."

He agrees that reforming the Ministry of Agriculture, notorious for its inertia, will not be easy. "It is one of the reasons I have been sent here, to take these people on. If you like, not that they are being difficult — no one is dragging their feet. I am not going to allow anyone to drag their feet."

MINISTRY TEAM



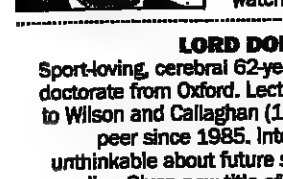
JACK CUNNINGHAM, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Trim 57-year-old. Father a trade union boss in North East. Educated Jarrow Grammar School and Durham University (PhD in chemistry). Energy Minister (1976-79) under Callaghan. Since 1983 MP for Copeland, in Cumbria (Whitehaven 1970-83). Shadow Foreign Secretary (1992-94), Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary (1994-95) and Shadow Heritage Secretary (1995-97). Likes fell walking, gardening and fly-fishing. Taste for fast cars (fined £150 for doing 103mph in 1989).



JEFFREY ROOKER, Minister of State. Pugnacious, 56-year-old Brummie. MP since 1974 for Perry Barr, the mixed suburban-inner city constituency where he was born. Degrees in engineering and industrial relations from Aston and Warwick. Deputy Shadow Leader of the Commons (1994-97). No previous interest in farming. Cunningham's deputy with responsibility for food safety. Reputation as unclutterable puntin. Hobbies include fell walking and cooking.



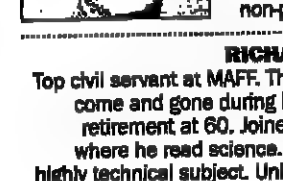
ELLIOT MORLEY, Parliamentary Secretary. Large, affable, bearded, media-friendly Liverpoolian, aged 44. Father an ambulance driver. Trained as teacher and headed a department at Greatfield High School, Hull (1979-87). Since 1987 MP for Scunthorpe, mixed rural-industrial seat on Humber. Responsible for fisheries and countryside, areas he shadowed in Opposition. Knowledgeable bird-watcher and leading anti-hunting crusader.



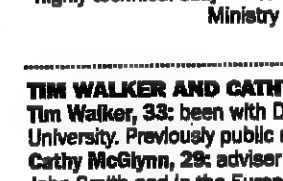
LORD DONOGHUE, Parliamentary Secretary. Sport-loving, cerebral 62-year-old. Grammar school boy with philosophy doctorate from Oxford. Lecturer at LSE (1963-74). Senior policy adviser to Wilson and Callaghan (1974-79). Times leader writer (1981-82). Life peer since 1985. Intellectual heavyweight with remit to think the unthinkable about future subsidies and the EU's common agricultural policy. Given new title of Minister for Farming and the Food Industry.



JOHN HOME ROBERTSON, Parliamentary Private Secretary. Wealthy, Roman Catholic, Border Scots socialist laird, aged 49. Owns 800-acre farm in Berwickshire. Educated at Ampleforth College and West of Scotland College of Agriculture. MP for East Lothian since 1983. Opposition agriculture spokesman 1984-87, 1988-90. Dropped as Scottish housing spokesman in 1988 for sympathising with non-payment of poll tax.



RICHARD PACKER, Permanent Secretary. Top civil servant at MAFF. Three other Agriculture Ministers have already come and gone during his tenure. Still has seven years to go before retirement at 60. Joined MAFF straight from Manchester University where he read science. Formidable operator with vast knowledge of highly technical subject. Unlikely to acquiesce quietly in emancipation of Ministry to which he has devoted his life. Likes "living intensely" as recreation in Who's Who.



TIM WALKER AND CATHY MCGLYNN, special advisers. Tim Walker, 33: been with Dr Cunningham since 1995. Degree in science from Manchester University. Previously public relations manager at Royal Academy of Engineering. Cathy McGlynn, 29: adviser to Cunningham since 1993. Previously worked as researcher for late John Smith and in the European Parliament. Degree in government from Essex University.

The In-Tray

Lying in wait in Dr Cunningham's in-tray were some of the most intractable problems inherited by the new Government. "Little ticking time bombs," as he describes them. Ticking most loudly are fish and beef. Two of the issues that have most poisoned relations between Britain and the rest of the European Union. Dr Cunningham believes that solutions are more likely to be found by avoiding the "bluff and bluster" of the previous Government.

FISH:

Murmurings of discontent among fishermen threaten to turn into open street and port protests if no satisfactory deal is struck at the EU summit on quota-hopping later this month in Amsterdam.

This is the practice whereby some 160 foreign-owned boats, mainly Spanish and Dutch, have been able to catch fish allocated to the British fleet by buying up British fishing licences and registering in Britain. They take about a quarter of the national catch. Fishermen want the Rome Treaty amended to allow Britain to ban quota-hopping. The previous Government had promised to veto other decisions at Amsterdam unless this was

achieved. Dr Cunningham dismisses such threats as "never-never land stuff". Instead the Government is hoping to get permission to limit the impact of quota-hoppers by requiring them to land a minimum proportion of their catch at British ports and to include a minimum percentage of British nationals in their crews.

This is unlikely to appease the fishing industry which is also facing cuts of up to 30 per cent in catches of some fish as part of an EU programme to conserve stocks. The cuts, already agreed in principle by the Tory Government and accepted as necessary by Dr Cunningham, are due to start taking effect later this year.

BEEF:

For all the talk of a fresh start in Britain's relations with the EU, an end to the beef ban is no nearer, and a new dispute is looming over exports of beef from other EU countries to Britain.

The ban has been in force since March of last year when the previous Government admitted the probability of a link between "mad cow" disease and a new strain of the human brain illness CJD.

Dr Cunningham refuses to commit himself to any target date for lifting the ban, holding out only the prospect of "step-by-step" progress, possibly starting with beef from Northern

Ireland, which is best able to guarantee BSE-free meat.

Farmers, suffering from the lowest cattle prices in more than 15 years, are agitating for controls on beef imported from EU countries, including Germany, which do not apply such BSE safeguards as removing spinal cord from carcasses.

EU countries are suspected of under-reporting cases of BSE in their own herds, and Dr Cunningham is expected soon to receive scientific advice that imports of beef should be halted if not subjected to the same controls as in Britain. He has said he would act on such advice if he got it.

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Jospin draws up his daring Cabinet in pink, red and green

FROM ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS

LIONEL JOSPIN, the new French Prime Minister, last night named a government marked by an unlikely combination of pro-European Socialists and anti-Maastricht campaigners from the hard Left, including three Communists.

M. Jospin's first Cabinet, which contains seven women, was designed to revolutionise the macho world of French politics and appease German fears that he will turn his back on economic and

monetary union. But his decision to give jobs to all the components of the "rainbow alliance" could lead to many months of uncertainty for France and its European partners.

The Prime Minister will need to show skill and authority to stamp a clear political line on a government made up of three Communists, a Green and an array of 23 Socialists and leftwingers from fringe parties, who are themselves divided over Europe.

In a sign that he intends to join the single currency, M. Jospin gave the post of Foreign Minister to

Hubert Védrine, 49, a close associate of the late President Mitterrand, who was one of the main architects of the Maastricht treaty. M. Védrine, a former diplomat, will have to "cohabit" with such figures as Jean-Pierre Chevènement, 58, who left the Socialist Party to campaign against European integration. He was made Interior Minister.

The Communist Party is equally certain to maintain its hostility to Maastricht despite its announcement yesterday that it had accepted three ministerial posts. The Com-

munist, entering government for the first time in 13 years, said they had received a "satisfactory" response to their demand for wage rises for the low paid.

Marie-George Buffet, 48, an ally of the Communist leader, Robert Hue, is France's new Sports Minister. Jean-Claude Gayssot, 52, is Transport Minister, and Michelle Demessine, 49, becomes Junior Minister for Tourism. Dominique Voynet, 38, leader of the French Green Party, completed the "rose, rouge, vert" government when she accepted the job of Environment

Minister. She will be part of a Cabinet in which women have more than a token presence for the first time in French history.

Marine Aubry, 46, daughter of Jacques Delors, the former European Commission President, was appointed as Employment Minister and deputy leader of the Government. Catherine Trautmann, 47, the Mayor of Strasbourg, was named as Culture Minister, and Elisabeth Guigou, 50, the former European Affairs Minister, becomes Justice Minister. However, the power base

within government could lie with three of M. Jospin's closest allies, who were all given key posts. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, 47, an economics professor, was made Finance Minister. Claude Allègre, 60, Education Minister, and Daniel Vaillant, 46, is charged with overseeing relations between the Government and the National Assembly.

□ **Gaullist revolt:** President Chirac's troubles deepened yesterday as Alain Juppé, his former Prime Minister and right-hand man, faced a powerful rebellion likely to

oust him as Gaullist leader. In an indirect attack on the President, Philippe Séguin and Edouard Balladur both signalled their intention to replace M. Juppé as president of the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR). M. Séguin is the clear favourite.

M. Juppé, who has been blamed for the Centre Right's defeat on Sunday, bowed to internal critics yesterday when he agreed to create a "collegiate" system at the head of the RPR. The move is almost certain to presage his dismissal before the end of the year.

Chancellor is left badly bruised in battle over gold

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL'S Government narrowly escaped disaster yesterday when Theo Waigel, the embattled Finance Minister, survived a hotly debated no-confidence motion by a margin of 17 votes.

But, despite the German Chancellor's confidently declared commitment to European economic and monetary union, there was no disguising that the Bonn Government has been badly bruised. "We are watching the end of the Kohl era," said Rudolf Scharping, the Social Democratic parliamentary leader.

"A herd of dancing elephants in a porcelain shop would have caused less damage than you and your Government," said Joachim Fischer, the Green Party leader. Herr Kohl — who had cancelled a trip to Paris for the emergency debate — tried to boost the fighting spirit of his demoralised backbenchers with a blistering attack on the Opposition. His full-bodied support probably helped Herr Waigel in the confidence vote — 328 deputies supported him against 311 opponents — but more damning was an opinion poll showing that one in two Germans favours the Finance Minister's dismissal.

At issue was Herr Waigel's handling of the Bundesbank gold reserves, which he wants to revalue. The windfall profits were supposed to ease the country's budgetary crisis. After negotiations on Monday

with Herr Waigel, the Bundesbank appeared to have softened some of its initial resistance, but it has forced the Government to forgo any 1997 profits. The point was to banish all suspicion of "creative accounting" on the road to EMU, 1997 being the critical assessment year.

Herr Kohl, waving off opposition heckling in a debate unruly by German standards, said the country would pull

‘Dancing elephants in a porcelain shop would have caused less damage’

out all the stops to meet the Maastricht public deficit goal of 3 per cent of gross domestic product. Although the phrasing was familiar, stressing both the punctual start of EMU and strict adherence to the entry criteria, the emphasis was plainly on sticking to the 1999 start-up date.

"This is a historical chance," he said. "A chance that will not be repeated. I will do everything in my power to keep to the time plan and the criteria. I warn those who think that the problems would become

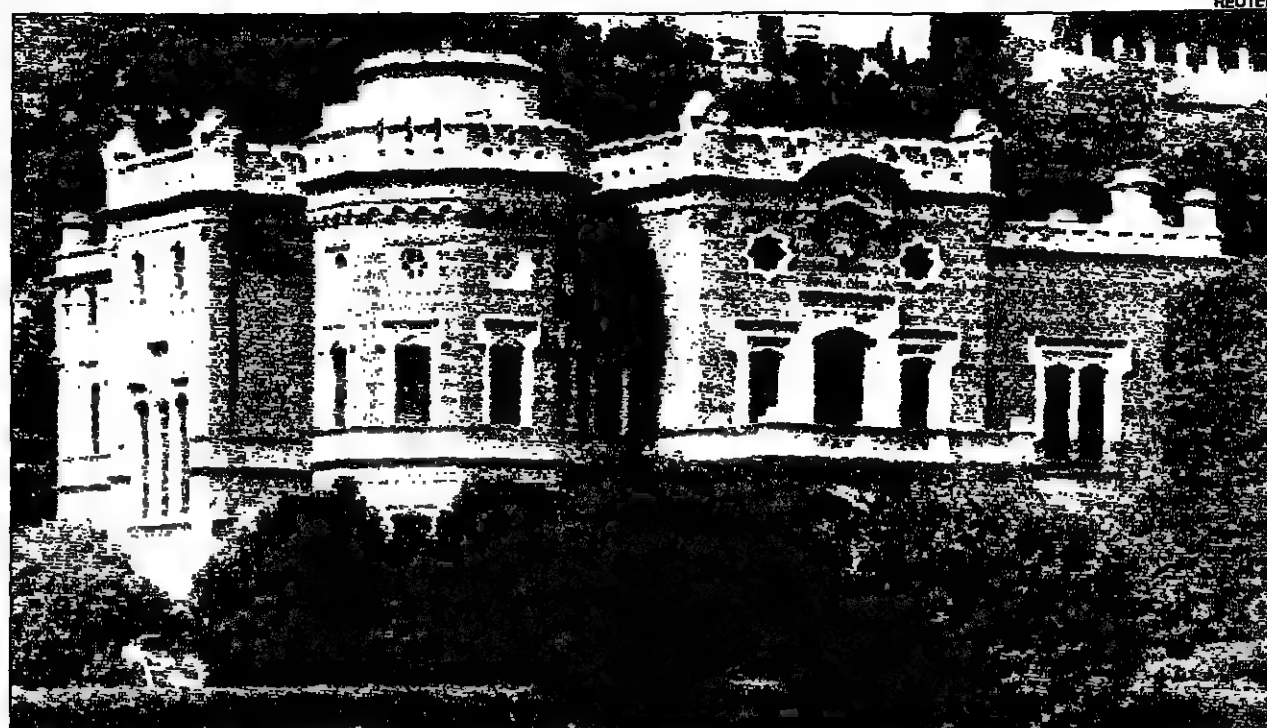
easier after delaying monetary union." Delay, he said, would have a destructive impact on Germany's export markets and on employment.

Yet Herr Waigel's budgetary mess — he has to plug a DM19 billion (£7 billion) shortfall in the 1997 budget — shows how difficult meeting the Maastricht targets has become.

The Finance Minister has already abandoned any pretence that he can achieve the total public debt goal of 60 per cent of GDP — it will be significantly over 61 per cent with an upward tendency — and is hoping that allowance will be made for the special debt burden imposed by unification. The 3 per cent deficit goal, however, remains part of Bonn's official credo, to keep other EMU candidates true to fiscal rectitude.

Herr Waigel said that he would speed privatisation of Telekom, motorway restaurants and airport property, and thus raise about DM10 billion. But those earnings cannot count in the EMU assessment. He also announced yesterday a strict capping of the budget: all ministerial expenditures of more than £340,000 will have to be approved by him.

The Chancellor said the Cabinet would decide soon whether a supplementary budget was needed. The Opposition accused the Government of a "fire sale".



The Villa Feltrinelli where Mussolini spent his final days and from which he tried to escape to Switzerland

Duce's last home to become luxury hotel

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE villa on Lake Garda in which the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini spent his final days is to be turned into a luxury hotel.

Daniele Roscia, the Mayor of Brescia, said the Villa Feltrinelli at Gargnano was to become a 25-room hotel. He said he did not regard the villa's Fascist connections as "ghoulish", even though the doomed Mussolini lived there and installed his mistress, Clara Petacci, nearby. The pair tried to escape to Switzerland in April 1945, but were shot by partisans at a farmhouse on Lake Como and then hung upside down in a square in the centre of Milan. The 19th-century villa, which once belonged to the

Feltrinelli publishing family, was sold in 1981 to a Brescia businessman who wants to capitalise on its position on the lake. Gargnano is now noted for its bathing and sailing facilities. But towards the end of 1943, as the Fascist regime crumbled and the Nazis occupied Rome, the town became the headquarters of Mussolini's puppet government, known as the Republic of Salò.

The once all-powerful Duce cut a reduced and rather pathetic figure at Gargnano, according to contemporary accounts. He was in effect a prisoner of the Germans, and subject to the Nazi governor-general in Garda, Rudolf Rahn. A German doctor who

treated the Duce described him as a "ruin of a man".

The nearby villa where Clara Petacci lived, 11 Vittoriale, had been given by Mussolini to the eccentric Fascist poet and pilot, Gabriele D'Annunzio. In 1925, partly because Mussolini saw D'Annunzio as a charismatic rival and wanted to exile him to the mountains, D'Annunzio conducted love affairs at the villa with a string of famous women, including the actress Eleanora Duse.

By coincidence it was also announced yesterday that another piece of Italy's history linked to the world of D'Annunzio and Duse, the romantic castle on the coast at Duino near Trieste, is for sale.



Mussolini installed his mistress near by

Russian roulette attack on trucker

FROM GILES TREMLETT
IN MADRID

FRENCH farmers played Russian roulette with a terrified Spanish lorry driver they suspected of carrying cheap farm produce into the country.

Miguel Trujillo, the driver, said he was surrounded by farmers who kicked and punched him as he prepared to leave a police checkpoint at L'Etriat, near Lyons. One produced a revolver, loaded it with a single bullet and spun the chamber. He then held it against the driver's forehead and pulled the trigger.

"He fired twice. He was about to fire a third time when I managed to kick the gun out of his hands, break free and run," Señor Trujillo said. "I have never been so scared in my life."

He said that French checkpoints made no attempt to stop the five attacking him. "I thought that they would come and help me. But they didn't come," he said.

Señor Trujillo was so frightened that he drove non-stop back to Spain, where he reported the incident to police in his home town of Mijas, near Málaga.

The attack was the most serious in a series of assaults by roving pickets on Spanish drivers over the past month. Another was treated in hospital near Montpellier two weeks ago after trying to stop farmers burning his lorry.

French farmers say they face ruin because they are unable to compete with cheap fruit and vegetables imported from Spain.

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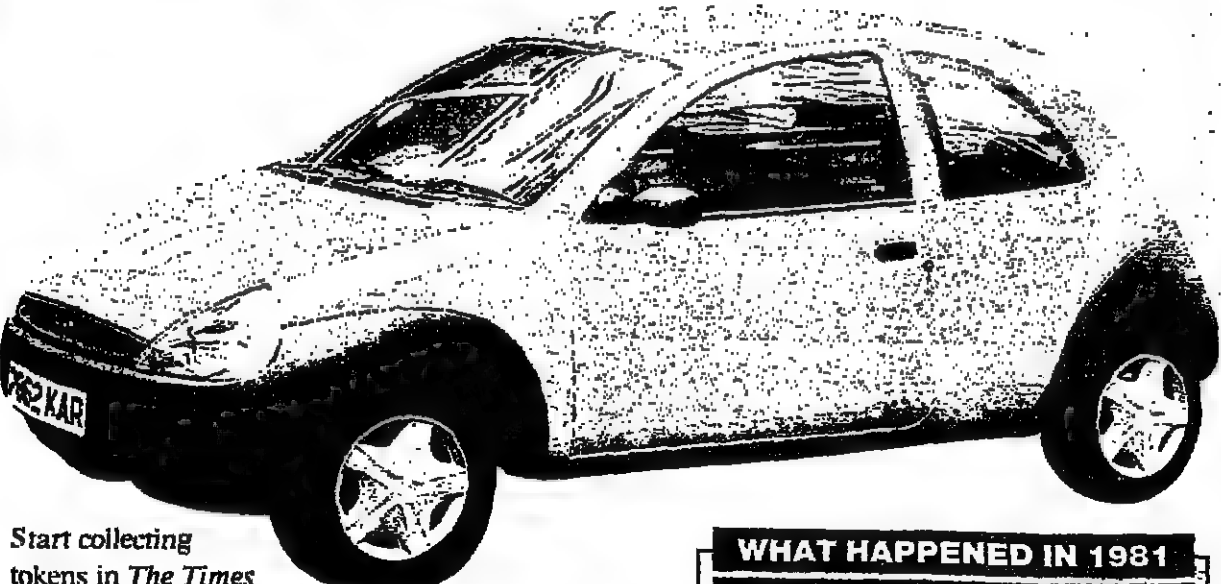
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CHANGING TIMES

Blair vows to push Kohl for go-ahead on Eurofighter

By Roger Boyes in Bonn and Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

THE German Defence Minister yesterday tried to reassure Britain that his country remains committed to the £40 billion Eurofighter aircraft project.

However, after a meeting in Bonn with George Robertson, his British counterpart, Volker Rühe was only able to predict that the outlook for the Eurofighter project "looked better than 50-50".

Mr Robertson had underlined his concern for the four-nation programme after renewed fears that Germany might pull out because of lack of funds. Herr Rühe said his Government hoped to resolve the matter at a Cabinet meeting on July 11, when next year's budget would be discussed.

Last night, Tony Blair promised to put pressure on Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, to sign up to the final phases of the Eurofighter programme when he sees him tomorrow.

In the Commons, the Prime Minister said the Eurofighter project was important for British defence and jobs, and he would press the Chancellor to proceed with it. "We will be doing everything we can to see the project out," he promised.

Eurofighter is being developed by Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain. The four

countries are due to sign the production investment phase, which would allow the primary manufacturers in each of the nations to build the production lines. Britain's main Eurofighter factory would be at Warton, Lancashire.

The agreement was supposed to have been signed late last year but was delayed. However, the date keeps slipping because of Germany's budget difficulties. Bonn's defence budget has been cut and Herr Rühe is finding it difficult to raise the £1.25 billion needed for Germany's share of the next phase.

The defence budget for 1997 has been pared by DM2 billion (about £800 million). Herr Rühe argued that the size of this cut endangered the pre-production phase — building and preparing the factories for Eurofighter — as well as training and retaining the skilled workers. Half of the money has been found by delaying the modernisation of some weapons systems, such as the Leopard 2 tank. Although Herr Rühe was once a Eurofighter-sceptic, he is now a convert.

Manfred Bischoff, chief of DASA, the main German aerospace contractor, said yesterday his company was subsidising the pre-production

stage of the Eurofighter to the tune of £400,000 a day. He demanded a quick decision from Bonn, or he would consider withdrawing from the project.

British Aerospace has been lobbying the Labour Government to apply pressure on the Germans. In opposition, Labour fully supported the Eurofighter programme. The topic is likely to remain one of the most sensitive issues between Bonn and London.

To underline British industry's concerns about the fate of thousands of jobs which are linked to the Eurofighter project, leaders of engineering trade unions went to Germany to lobby Bonn. A total of 40,000 British jobs are at stake.

The Eurofighter 2000 is the biggest collaborative industrial project in Europe, the equivalent in cost of four Channel tunnels.



A Polish boy dazes while a nun applauds the Pope's arrival at an outdoor Mass in Kallisz yesterday. In an apparently unscripted speech, the pontiff, who is on an 11-day visit to his homeland, paid tribute to millions of Jews who died in Nazi concentration camps in Poland, and reminded Polish Catholics of their shared heritage.

Annan hints at use of force to topple Sierra Leone coup

By Michael Binnon, Diplomatic Editor

Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, said yesterday that as a last resort force might have to be used to dislodge the Sierra Leone coup leaders — a view reluctantly shared by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, at their meeting in London.

After an hour's talks, in which Mr Annan briefed the Foreign Secretary on the decisions at the summit conference of African Unity, the UN head said it was important that the entire African continent had spoken with one voice against the military coup.

"It shows the kind of change we are seeing in Africa these days and I think it needs to be applauded," he said. "I would maintain what I have said earlier, that if use of force becomes a last resort and it is inevitable it may have to come to that." But he added that there was no question of a UN force going into the country.

Mr Cook said Britain would rather see a resolution by negotiation, but ultimately force might have to be considered. Officials in Whitehall, however, insisted that there would be no lessening of pressure on Nigeria to return to democracy, even if Nigerian troops restored the legitimate Government in Sierra Leone.

Mr Cook said the coup leaders "have no friends among their neighbours, no friends in the region and no friends within Europe".

He telephoned Peter Penfold, the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, who arrived yesterday in neighbouring Guinea, to congratulate him on his evacuation of British citizens and his initiative in arranging a ceasefire so that civilians could leave. About 200 more refugees were arriving in Conakry yesterday. Britain has chartered a Boeing 747 to bring them home.

Mr Harare: The OAU summit ended here yesterday with an assurance from Zimbabwe's President Mugabe, its new chairman, that Africa's future coup-makers would find life much more difficult than they have in the past. Jan Karth writes: "I can assure you future coups will be handled in a rough way," he said.



The Eurofighter: thousands of jobs are at stake

Russian general offers to make treachery pay

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

RUSSIAN agents working for foreign powers have been offered a chance to come in from the cold while continuing to line their pockets.

General Nikolai Kovalyov, head of the Federal Security Service, said in an interview on the Moscow television channel MTK that he had opened a hotline to enable Russians spying for foreign countries to turn double agents. By disclosing all to his security service, these agents

would not only be assured peace of mind, they would also be able to continue accepting payments from their foreign employers.

"We will find all of you in the end, sooner or later," the jocular general said. For those who reject the offer, the consequences could be dire. Russians caught selling secrets abroad face the death penalty, still in force despite demands for its abolition by the Council of Europe.

All calls to the hotline proved fruitless yesterday. It was constantly engaged.

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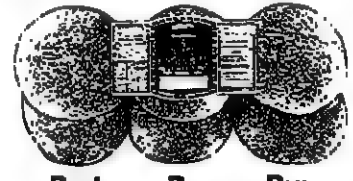
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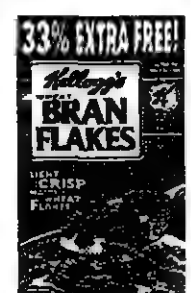
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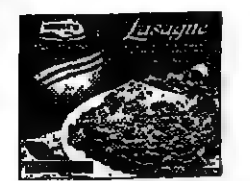
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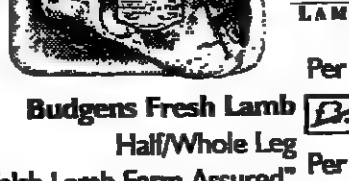
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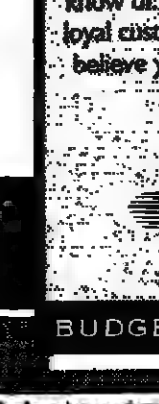
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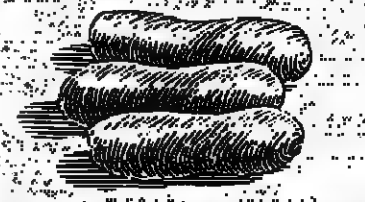
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Shanghai shines in new cultural revolution



James Pringle in Shanghai
contrasts the drabness of the Mao era with the bustling city's high-rise renaissance

ALDOUS HUXLEY once described Shanghai as "life itself — nothing more intensely living can be imagined". But the elegant and squalid city they once called the Paris of the East was for more than 40 years of Communist rule from 1949 just a pale imitation of the rumbustious melting pot it was in the 1920s and 1930s.

Punished first by Mao for its imperialist past, then by his successors for its radical leftism during the Cultural Revolution, Shanghai remained largely moribund even as the southern coastal provinces began their economic take-off from 1979 under the free-market policy and opening-up to the outside world of Deng Xiaoping, the late reformist leader. One official here said Shanghai did not begin its explosive growth until 1992 because the Chinese leadership still feared attack across the East China Sea from Japan.

But now Shanghai has made up economic ground so fast and conspicuous consumption is so prevalent that a senior Roman Catholic churchman said last week: "The greatest threat to Catholicism is not the Communist Party but rampant materialism." A sign near Hongqiao airport bears Shanghai's latest credo: "Development is the irrefutable imperative."

Shanghai is being projected — some say hyped — as a 21st-century city, comparable to Seattle and Singapore. While that is almost certainly premature, the hopes of the party economic reformers in Beijing are pinned on the city, and on its giant satellite of Pudong. This lies east across the Huangpu River, and was

described in an 1983 guidebook as a largely uninteresting industrial area. It is now a powerhouse of high-tech, high-rise development built with foreign capital and low-wage Chinese migrant workers on party orders.

"Shanghai is a giant experiment," said a foreign executive. "It's allowing bankruptcies, mass lay-offs of moribund state-run industry workers and their re-employment. This is the one Chinese city where they feel relatively secure doing this. If it works here it can work in the rest of China — though, of course, experiments can also go wrong." That is what worries the authorities here, and that is why the Communist Party applies both ideological tightness and careful, if discreet, surveillance by security

Two lamps are better than one. Shanghai can't replace Hong Kong. Hong Kong can't replace Shanghai.

police. With the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule at the end of this month, and the fifteenth party congress in the autumn, Chinese leaders are ultra-sensitive to any form of unrest. Diplomats say there is a "real concern about stability because of growing unemployment and wealth disparity". Senior officials candidly admit that Shanghai newspapers are under orders not to mention when a migrant worker is involved in crime, though most Shanghaiers believe most crimes are committed by these migrants from poor inland provinces.

Foreign envoys say everything — worker unrest, residents' anger at leaving their old homes for distant suburbs and cultural life — are quite tightly controlled. One diplomat said that, even as the city proudly shows off its splendid new museum and a giant new



Modern glass and steel buildings dominate the Shanghai skyline. The one-time "Paris of the East" is now aspiring to match the prosperity of Seattle or Singapore

theatre and opera house under construction, "you can count on one hand, possibly two, the number of foreign films passed last year for showing in local cinemas". Shanghai, after all, has a reputation for unpredictable political twists and turns: the ruinous Cultural Revolution began here. Yet optimism is the watchword as Shanghai prepares for the Hong Kong handover. While some low-level officials see Shanghai taking over Hong Kong's mantle as China's financial centre, senior officials know Shanghai still has a long way to go. Still, there is a

sense that new Shanghai is a home-grown creation, while Hong Kong, with its British past, is not.

Xu Kuangdi, the Mayor, put it tactfully: "Shanghai and Hong Kong will be like a violin and a piano making beautiful music together."

Zhao Qizheng, the deputy Mayor, a 57-year-old former nuclear physicist known as Mr Pudong for his spearheading of development in what in 1990 were largely muddy rice fields, foresees an economic corridor extending from Tokyo to Singapore and taking in both Shanghai and Hong

Kong. Farmers' sons and daughters becoming computer programmers and business executives will help fuel Shanghai's boom, though not displace Hong Kong, he says.

"Two lamps shining in China are better than one," he adds. "Shanghai cannot replace Hong Kong, Hong Kong cannot replace Shanghai."

From the granite Bund, the embankment where the British set up their banks and trading houses, to Pudong, with its giant television tower, its Times Square and its noisy construction sites — there are 23,000 in Shanghai, using 17

per cent of the world's cranes, city officials boast — there is a sense of bustling purpose and determination.

As a rare visitor to Shanghai in 1972, when the Gang of Four held sway, I found a city of fear where only a few old men were bold enough to whisper a welcome. There were only six foreigners (now there are 26,000 in a population of 13.5 million) then living in a city of Red Guards and workers' militias. I recall feeling lonely and miserable, then entering the eighth-floor restaurant of the Peace Hotel. I was astonished to recognise

the film actress Nancy Kwan, who had starred with William Holden in *The World of Suzie Wong*. She charmingly agreed to an interview on how she saw Mao's China, and I took notes with frozen fingers as junks sailed past on the Huangpu below in a city that suddenly felt less gloomy.

Shanghai is certainly not gloomy nowadays — even the migrant workers seem cheerful, dodging traffic while carrying goods to sites of new high rises replacing old quarters from which residents are removed to far-away new public housing schemes in

Pudong, roomier but less social. Shanghai has a sense of style yet still lacks sophistication, but many educated young girls have been on group holidays to South-East Asia and now have money to spend on clothes and cosmetics in trendy Huaihai Road with its Printemps store and pavement cafés.

"What they are doing here is quite remarkable," said one diplomat. "The sense of common purpose in the leadership is impressive, and the hype is justified if you compare the situation at the beginning of the decade with now."

Tiananmen vigil sends democracy call to Beijing

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY
IN HONG KONG

WITH the largest turnout in years, Hong Kong remembered Tiananmen Square last night on the eighth anniversary of the massacre. More than 60,000 people waved candles against the night sky and before a huge sign saying "Fight to the end".

It was a huge rebuke to Tung Chee-hwa, Chief Executive-designate, who two days earlier had called on people here to "put the baggage of Tiananmen behind you". Mr Tung has also repeatedly talked of sinister influences poised to create disorder in Hong Kong.

The centrepiece of this year's demonstration and vigil was a tall stone monument called *The Pillar of Shame* displaying piles of dead and dying people. There was also the usual replica of the "Goddess of Democracy" holding aloft the flame of freedom; the original had been erected in Tiananmen just before the final crackdown and was smashed to pieces by a tank.

It was to this statue that some of Hong Kong's leading democrats, holding torches, brought flowers, before bowing three times in respect to the hundreds who died on the same night eight years ago.

What was foremost in the



mind of the crowd and of the organisers was that this might be the last such vigil. But although Mr Tung has said often that Hong Kong must forget the past, the cries last night were to look to the future.

Martin Lee, chairman of the Democrats, the party with more seats than any other in the Legislative Council which will be abolished on July 1 and replaced by a Beijing-appointed body, said: "The great point here tonight is for Beijing and Mr Tung: we will continue to hold this vigil year after year until the verdict on Tiananmen is reversed. Those demonstrators who were killed in Beijing were not 'counter-revolutionaries', they were calling for democracy, and that is what we are doing here tonight."

Many families came to Victoria Park, the scene of the vigil and Hong Kong's largest open space. The father of twin 12-year-old girls said: "This may be the last one." His wife disagreed. "No, it will go on. I



A family joins the the 60,000 people at a candlelit vigil in Hong Kong yesterday

want my daughters to tell my grandchildren about these demonstrations."

Near them an elderly man wore a T-shirt with a picture of the late Deng Xiaoping, who ordered the tanks into Tiananmen in 1989. Under the picture were the words "Want to die for murder".

A cleaner in a university said: "We Chinese do not forget these things. Even the friends of Beijing in Hong Kong feel pain in their hearts tonight about Tiananmen."

Outside the park there were acute feelings. "I never come to things like this," said a middle-aged woman before the demonstration. "No matter how badly they treat us, we

Chinese never ask our parents to say they are sorry."

Szeto Wah, also a council member, shouted to the crowd: "Redress Tiananmen." He was greeted with a roar of "Yes".

Robin Munro, director of the Hong Kong office of the New York-based Human Rights Watch: Asia, who like many Western journalists in Victoria Park last night had been in Tiananmen in 1989, said: "They'll never be able to squash these demonstrations. Even if the new government has the temerity to try to stop them next year, these people will come with arms locked and maybe with bandages over their mouths."

Family service: Families of students killed at Tiananmen Square laid flowers and swept graves at Beijing cemeteries yesterday (James Pringle writes).

"It's impossible to forget," said Ding Zilin, whose son Jiang Jielian, a high-school student, was killed there at the age of 17. He was joined by his wife at a private memorial service for their son. They and 41 other bereaved parents sent a petition to the National People's Congress, China's parliament, last month seeking an official inquiry into the massacre and dialogue with the Government. They asked that their children be considered as patriots.

Circulation 'was faked by press bosses'

BY JONATHAN MIRSKY

HONG KONG'S Independent Commission Against Corruption yesterday arrested six executives of Hong Kong Standard Newspapers, charging them with inflating circulation figures.

The six, including two former employees of the group which publishes the *Hong Kong Standard* and *Sunday Standard*, were not named. They are accused of conspiring to inflate the papers' circulation figures by printing 23,000 surplus copies a day and selling them as waste, to deceive British auditors and local advertising clients of both newspapers. No journalists have been arrested and the commission emphasised that no journalists were under investigation.

The commission says the alleged fraud began at least three years ago.

Trading in shares of Sing Tao, the papers' parent company, was suspended yesterday amid talk that the group, valued at £20 million, was to be sold.

Rumours of a sell-off have been denied for weeks by Sally Aw, the publisher, but staff members on the *Hong Kong Standard* said yesterday that they believed a sale was imminent.

North Korea 'three weeks from famine'

FROM PETER CAPELLA IN GENEVA

NORTH Korea's public food distribution system will collapse within three weeks, leaving the country exposed to famine, the UN food relief agency said yesterday.

In a report on a fact-finding mission to the Communist country, the World Food Programme warned donor countries that the state-run monopoly will run out of food on June 20. It will not be able to provide the 100g (3.5oz) of grain daily ration, equivalent to a quarter of a minimum

emergency supply, on which most North Koreans have survived for months. WFP, appealing for 1.2 million tonnes more grain until October's harvest, said that foreign aid deliveries and pledges were not enough.

There is no alternative to the distribution system, which has propped up 78 per cent of the population since devastating floods destroyed crops in 1995 and 1996. Malnutrition means starvation will happen rapidly, aid officials said.

Seoul students admit worker's fatal beating

Seoul: A South Korean student group which has clashed violently with police acknowledged yesterday its members beat a man who died after their interrogation over whether he was a police informer.

The group said it was suspending its street protests demanding President Kim Young Sam's resignation and dispersing thousands of students who had gathered at Seoul university campuses.

But thousands of police in riot gear were sent to tighten the cordon around the capital's Hanyang University, vowing to arrest those involved in the beating as well as student leaders. Lee Senk, 23, a factory worker, was dead

when students took him to the university hospital yesterday. He suffered severe bruises all over his body, hospital officials said. "There had been some beating when students questioned Mr Lee," Lee Hoi Koo, a spokesman for the Hanchongryun group, told a news conference. "We express condolences over Mr Lee's death."

Mr Lee was the second person to die in five days of violence arising from student protests. On Monday, a policeman was killed after being run over by an armoured police car during a chaotic retreat by officers from stones and firebombs hurled by students. (AP)

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Military muffles the voices of dissent as violence mars eve of election

Algerians go to polls in shadow of civil war

FROM PETER SHAW-SMITH IN ALGERIA

ALGERIANS go to the polls today seeking a way out of a civil war that has claimed an estimated 60,000 lives in five years and cast a pall of fear and tension across North Africa's largest Arab country.

The panorama of the Bay of Algiers — a 15-mile expanse of harbour, ships and lights that twinkles amiably at night — gives no hint of a society so at odds with itself. But there is a darker side behind the facade of normality. Under Algeria's military-backed regime, the population is wary and silent.

About 40 parties will contest the election, but only five are likely to make any real impression on the make-up of the 380-seat National Assembly.

President Zeroual retains sweeping powers under the 1996 referendum, including the appointment of a third of the upper chamber, the Majlis el-Umma.

The few people here who are willing to speak freely are reluctant to back the Government's slogan that this election is about "the consecration of

the people's will". Journalists are followed by armed plainclothesmen who ostensibly provide protection but who also prevent the man in the street from speaking out.

A journalist with the Arabic daily *Al-Ahram* *al-Siyasi* with links to the Islamic opposition said he expected Abdelkader Bensalah's National Democratic Rally — the party closest to President Zeroual — to emerge victorious tomorrow with about 53 per cent of the vote. He predicted that Hamas (the Movement for Social Peace) would come second, with between 25 and 30 per cent, and the FFS (the Socialist Forces Front) third, with about 15-20 per cent.

The journalist said the elections were necessary, but added: "If all the political currents were represented, this would be the beginning of a solution." This was a clear reference to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the party which was winning the 1992 election when it was annulled.

The FIS remains outlawed



Algerian security forces surround the body of an alleged terrorist they killed in an Algiers street, watched by residents from their doorways. In another

outbreak of pre-election violence in a city that has suffered five years of bloodshed, a bomb exploded in a crowded market, killing ten people and

injuring another 40. Security was being stepped up yesterday as millions prepared to vote today in the first general election since 1992. (Reuters)

but the administration has spared no effort to portray the elections as free and fair: the official Algeria Press Service spoke of foreign journalists' "joy" to be here, while Monday's evening news showed soldiers and security officers casting their votes. APS reports that 244 international observers are here to monitor the poll.

A group of foreign journal-

ists were taken by an official to a farm where Ahmed, a 15-year-old youth, was killed in April by a group of 40 armed men who came down from nearby mountains. When the boy's father was questioned he looked to the officials for a prompt, and was recorded as asking: "What should I say in these journalists?"

In one recent massacre reported in the Algerian press,

the administration claimed that 42 people were killed by Islamic extremists in the region of Medea, 50 miles south-west of Algiers.

However, a former journalist, who was elected as the FIS MP for Sidi Aissa in December 1991 and was placed under arrest for four days in January 1992 before fleeing the country, gives a different version of the massacre. He claims that

an Islamic group had killed 24 army paratroopers in the region. Two days later, as a reprisal, he said, the army dropped napalm on the site and surrounded the area. Then they went in and killed 135 people, including women and children.

The former MP said: "If you win the trust of the people, as I did in 1991, you are hated by the military."

US panel to rule on human clones

Washington: Scientists should be able to create cloned human embryos, although they should be banned from creating cloned human babies, an American government ethics commission is expected to recommend on Saturday (Brownian Maddox writes).

The report is expected to say that privately funded scientists should be allowed to make cloned human embryos for research but not implant them in wombs. The 18-strong National Bioethics Advisory Commission has been entrusted with finding common ground between doctors who say that such research is needed and religious groups who oppose it. The panel's work began in February after Scottish scientists announced the existence of the cloned sheep Dolly.

Troops resign in tax battle

Oslo: Joergen Kosmo, the Norwegian Defence Minister, yesterday attempted to prevent the resignation of most of Norway's peacekeeping battalion in Bosnia by guaranteeing tax-free overseas allowances through 1997, the Defence Ministry said. Eighty per cent of the 700 troops with the Norwegian Mechanised Battalion operating with the Nato-led force resigned after the Government told them they must pay tax on an overseas allowance. "I guarantee that the overseas allowance will be tax-free through 1997," Mr Kosmo said. Battalion representatives in Oslo have recommended that the soldiers withdraw their resignation. (AFP)

Rao forgery case dropped

Delhi: Charges in a forgery trial were dropped against P. V. Narasimha Rao, the former Indian Prime Minister. It was one of three criminal cases which had forced him to quit last year as Congress party leader. Judge Ajit Bhargava dismissed the Government's claim that Mr Rao had been involved in an attempt in 1989 to defame V. P. Singh, an opposition leader who later became Prime Minister. "The judge said there was no evidence of conspiracy," said R. K. Anand, Mr Rao's lawyer. "It is a big victory." (Reuters)

Extra time for jailed Tapie

Paris: Bertrand Tapie, right, the jailed bankrupt French tycoon, was sentenced to another six months on tax evasion charges — for passing off pleasure cruises on his luxury yacht as business expenses. The appeals court upheld a lower court's conviction a year ago that Tapie had evaded more than FF12 million (£2 million) in taxes. Tapie, 54, is serving eight months for rigging a football match while he was boss of Marseilles. (Reuters)



Northern warlords unite to thwart Taliban

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT



Masood: fight to retake strategic northern town

ENEMIES of the Taliban Islamic army have forged a new military alliance in northern Afghanistan, amounting to a de facto division of the country in an intensifying civil war.

The strategic town of Jibal os-Siraj, 44 miles north of Kabul, the capital, is bearing the brunt of fighting. It is on the only all-weather road leading north to the Hindu Kush mountains, beyond which Taliban's enemies are massed. The war has also

returned to Kabul, a shattered city, for the first time since Taliban captured it eight months ago. An ammunition dump blew up in the Bala Hissar district yesterday, possibly from sabotage. Kabul is ethnically mixed, with many Shias, Tajiks and Uzbeks whose loyalties lie with anti-Taliban forces to the north. It is ripe for treachery.

Afghan volunteers are pouring into the Afghan border town of Spin Boldak to answer Taliban's call for tens of thousands of new recruits to enter the war. They have come from madrassas (rel-

igious schools), the traditional recruiting ground of Taliban, an army of students. Pakistan has given up all pretences of neutrality in the war. Immigration officials and paramilitary guards on the border watch the tide of volunteers, many carrying the white flag of Taliban, without interfering.

Bus owners are making windfall profits carrying the recruits: would-be fighters also arrive hanging on to crowded trucks and jammed

into decrepit cars, evidently filled with zeal as they answer the call for a jihad (holy war) against the northerners.

Buses delivering the students to the border start their 80-mile journey from Quetta, capital of Baluchistan province. Recruits come from thousands of religious schools throughout Pakistan, most of them new to war but fired by the belief that this is a religious crusade.

Before receiving weapons and rations they are driven eight miles over bumpy roads to Spin Boldak to hear sermons from Taliban officials,

after which they are taken to the Taliban headquarters city of Kandahar. Many of these largely untrained men will be thrown into battle north of Kabul against the Tajik army of Ahmed Shah Masood, a veteran fighter who is battling to retake Jibal os-Siraj.

He has seized some parts of the town, according to the Islamabad-based Afghan Islamic Press. It is a vital objective for General Masood: his stronghold in the Panjshir Valley is near by, and he will be vulnerable so long as Jibal os-Siraj is held by enemy forces.

India caught in missile row

Karachi: Reacting to a report in America that India has deployed medium-range Prithvi missiles along its border, Pakistan said it might seek a similar system to meet the threat (Zahid Hussain writes). The report in the *Washington Post* said India had moved more than a dozen missiles to Jullundur, an eastern Punjab town near the Pakistan border. An Indian Defence Ministry spokesman denied the story.

Boeing pilot goes astray

Delhi: Indian police have charged a Saudi pilot with "irresponsible flying" after he landed his Boeing 747 with 344 people on board at a tiny military airbase instead of at nearby Madras airport. The jet's tyres burst as the pilot applied emergency brakes to avoid overshooting the runway. (AFP)

THE SUNDAY TIMES DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

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MELINDA MESSENGER BARES HER SOUL THIS WEEKEND



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Dr Thomas Stuttford on limiting the steroid risk of osteoporosis; sunburnt heads; the importance of fibre in the diet; blood disorders; and the use of antidepressants

Guarding against the side-effects of steroids

After many years in which the death rate from asthma has been steadily increasing it is at last beginning to fall despite an increased incidence of the condition. The probable reason is that doctors are now using corticosteroid treatment by mouth or injection more readily in severe attacks and are increasingly relying on inhaled steroids to keep the condition at bay.

The treatment of the life-threatening, and unpleasant, group of diseases known as the inflammatory bowel diseases has been so improved by the introduction of another steroid preparation, Entocort, that many more people are now able to live an ordinary life despite their troubles. Likewise patients are enabled to walk and use their other joints because of steroids, and many others would have been blinded by temporal arteritis but for the use of heavy doses of steroids as a first aid measure.

Despite the revolution which came about with the introduction of steroids they are still feared by the general public. Many parents, for instance fail to allow the wheezy child to obtain the relief from the symptoms of asthma by using a steroid inhaler as they fear, quite wrongly, that the patient might develop serious side effects. Any side effects from inhaled steroids are so mild as to be almost insignificant.

Any revolution, before it settles down, causes casualties and the steroid revolution was no exception. Nearly 50 years ago, when steroids were introduced, doctors temporarily lost their sense of caution and were dazzled by the power of the new group of drugs

and consequently prescribed them in unwisely large doses. Within a short time the side effects had wreaked terrible havoc among the patients. People found that with steroids their backs had become rounded and humped, their faces moon-like, their bones crumpled with osteoporosis and their guts perforated. Some people became wildly manic while taking steroids; others, as I remember from a case I was looking after as a junior hospital doctor, were so depressed that they tried to jump out of the windows.

The stories of the early disasters of steroid therapy have lived on and have lost nothing in their retelling so that a mythology has developed about it which has not been dispelled by the very different circumstances which now exist. The use of much smaller doses, the introduction of improved preparations and the careful monitoring of all treatment has allowed doctors to utilise the advantage of steroids while minimising the chance of patients suffering any sudden disaster.

Although the severe osteoporotic bone-crunching days of the 1950s are over, even the smaller doses of steroid therapy taken continuously increases the likelihood that a patient will suffer some thinning of the bones.

Over a quarter of a million people in the United Kingdom now rely, with great advantage to their health, on continuous steroid therapy. Over 40 per cent of the patients on long-term treatment for asthma, however, suffer from osteoporosis that is severe enough for it to contribute to a fracture after a comparatively trivial injury. A similar percentage receiving treatment for



The skin of the scalp and face is particularly sensitive to sun and prolonged exposure could lead to skin cancer, as well as several lesser skin disorders

THE DAYS when men wore hats have long passed. Last month saw the hottest Bank Holiday weekend for five years and the sun shone down on scores of balding heads and provided a clear picture of the way in which too much sun can ravage the skin on male scalps. The scalps of men who have spent their lives in the open air,

especially if they have worked in hot climates, pay the price.

The skin of the scalp and face is particularly sensitive to sun and is liable to develop solar dermatoses, the skin conditions which are the sequel to exposure to sunlight. These problems

include all three types of common skin cancer, as well as several lesser skin disorders.

Men with receding hairlines are more vulnerable to scalp burns than women, but research has shown that they tend to use sun protecting screens with a

lower protection factor. Most of the bank holiday sun-worshippers didn't look as if they had ever used sun screens at all. But now a preparation is available for men with thinning hair.

Called Scalp Bloc, it provides a protection factor of 20, and meets the recommendation of the Health Education Authority. It is non-greasy, non-scented, is not obvious and does not make a mess of any of the hair which a man may still have. Scalp Bloc is not only likely to be useful to those who spend their life out of doors or holidaymakers, but also to the short cropped as well as the bald.

Head for protection during a heatwave

rheumatoid arthritis suffer collapse of a vertebra. Despite these figures and the obvious hazard they demonstrate of osteoporosis as a complication of long-term steroid therapy, only 50 per cent of the patients have been prescribed any treatment to protect the strength of their bones by preventing osteoporosis.

Bones are constantly remodelled — old bone is removed by cells known as osteoclasts, new bone is laid down by osteoblasts. A group of drugs, the diphosphonates, reduces the reabsorption of bone by inhibiting the action of osteoclasts; as a result the strength and bulk of the bones are increased.

One of the diphosphonate drugs Didronel PMO etidronate, which is supplied together with calcium supplements, has been approved this week by the authorities for the prevention of osteoporosis in patients regularly taking steroids. The combination is also useful in the treatment for prevention of all other types of established or incipient osteoporosis.

Didronel PMO is taken daily with water, when fasting, for a fortnight; thereafter calcium supplements are swallowed each day for two-and-a-half months. This cycle is repeated, and throughout the whole period the patient needs to be careful to maintain an adequate vitamin D intake.

The benefits of bran

All Bran and similar breakfast cereals may not seem to have much in common with some of California's finest red wines but the suppliers of both products have recently petitioned the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for permission to display health claims on the labels of their products.

Mondavi's petition to advertise the advantages of the health-giving properties of modest amounts of red wine has already been accepted by the FDA and now appears on the company's bottles.

The FDA has the daunting task of reading and reporting, within the next 90 days, on more than 18 volumes of research papers about the effect of the incidents of cancer of the colon, and other large bowel conditions, of the dietary fibre contained in wheatbran.

The two Kellogg brothers, one a doctor, first discovered the process of flaking wheat 104 years ago, and 24 years later, had produced the first All Bran mixture. The claim on the value of fibre to the breakfast eater's health is being submitted by Kellogg's. Its basis is that colon cancer is associated with many factors, including diet. The manufacturers suggest that medical evidence collected for the past 25 years supports the premise that eating insoluble fibre from foods containing wheatbran, or wholewheat, as part of a low-fat diet, reduces the risk of colon cancer.

Just as the health advantages of red wine are not

confined to that bestowed by Californian vintages, nor are the advantages of a low-fat, high-fibre diet restricted to Kellogg's. Fibre, to be beneficial, does not necessarily have to be eaten at breakfast but if it is, it contributes to the low-fat, high-polysaccharide early-morning diet favoured by dietitians as the best means of ending the nocturnal fast, and at the same time preventing a post-fast rise in blood fats, including the pernicious very low density fats.

To be effective, the amount of bran taken has to be considerable: an extra 12 grams — slightly more than a teaspoonful — has to be added to the diet. Merely scattering a tablespoonful of bran over porridge, breakfast foods, or stewed fruit is not going to have any

appreciable influence on howel action, or reduce the excretion of bile salts, which is thought to be another of the factors that makes bran anticancerous.

An analysis of more than 55 surveys on the medicinal qualities of bran was reported a few years ago in the journal of the National Cancer Institute. The report showed that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of fibre in

the diet, and the incidence of cancer of the colon — the more fibre eaten, the less chance of developing a malignant growth in the large gut.

A high wheatbran diet, taken for two years or more, has also been shown to reduce the rate at which pre-malignant colonic polyps form in people who have a hereditary tendency to develop them.

The American National Research Council advocates that the low-fat diet, now universally recommended, should be accompanied by more fruit, vegetables and whole-grain cereal products.

People worry, not without good cause, that a slightly more than a teaspoonful of bran could cause socially unacceptable wind. As baked-bean eaters have long known, excessive wind is initially a complication of any fibre-rich diet, but this disadvantage becomes progressively less as the body becomes accustomed to the change.

Excessive wind is also less likely if food is eaten slowly. One consolation for those who like to take their fibre in the form of All Bran, or in other wheat products, is that wheatbran ferments more slowly than fibre derived from fruits or oats. Too many apples may therefore be more upsetting to the guts than an equivalent amount of fibre derived from wheat.

Problems with the blood

THIS WEEK Dr Christine Lee, a consultant haematologist and director of the haemophilia unit at the Royal Free Hospital, London, has been made the first professor of haemophilia in the country. The hospital's haemophilia unit studies and treats bleeding disorders where the patient has an abnormal tendency to bleed, or has blood that clots too readily. The unit also cares for the growing number of patients on anti-coagulant therapy, which is likely to increase as more patients with atrial fibrillation (cardiac arrhythmia) are prescribed Warfarin.

Professor Lee, Dr Relan Ahmed, a research fellow in the obstetrics and gynaecology department at the Royal Free, together with Mr Dimitrios Economides, a consultant at the hospital and a senior lecturer in the university, have been investigating women who have heavy periods. Most doctors tend to look for the obvious causes of heavy periods (menorrhagia) such as fibroids, pelvic infection, thyroid disease and endometriosis, and carry out a full blood count to exclude the more sinister anaemias. If they draw a blank with these, they

attribute the menorrhagia to dysfunctional uterine bleeding, which is thought to result from abnormalities in the hypothalamic-pituitary axis.

The Royal Free team has studied the blood of all patients aged 16-50 who have attended the hospital complaining of heavy menstrual bleeding but in whom no obvious cause can be found.

Twelve per cent of the women who could readily have been classified as having dysfunctional uterine bleeding had one of the hereditary disorders of blood-clotting. As a result of their research, Professor Lee, Dr Ahmed and Mr Economides recommend that any woman who has a normal pelvic examination but suffers from menorrhagia should be screened to exclude a bleeding disorder, especially von Willebrand's disease, an abnormality in, or deficiency of, one of the plasma proteins.

In some cases, heavy periods can be successfully treated with a nasal spray. Awareness of a tendency to bleed is useful so that appropriate measures can be taken before women have dental treatment, surgery or give birth. Patients should also avoid aspirin.



Anorexia: Prozac has proved a successful therapy

Anorexia and antidepressants

THE NEW antidepressants, the 5HT reuptake inhibitors, are increasingly taking their rightful place in the treatment of many conditions which produce clinical depression. Drugs in this group have also proved useful in treating a variety of other conditions in which there may be a depressive element in the illness.

Research has already demonstrated the value of the 5HT reuptake inhibitors in the care of patients with obsessive compulsive disorder, Asperger's syndrome, panic attacks and many phobias.

Two recent reports on Prozac, which is one of the 5HT reuptake inhibitors, have found two other indications for its prescription. At a conference in the United States there was an account of treating anorexia. Patients with anorexia who were given Prozac as part of their therapy were four times more likely to retain any weight gained during treatment, than those patients who were given a placebo.

Other research showed that some forms of anger and aggression were also well controlled by Prozac. Many doctors have been using 5HT reuptake inhibitors to treat selected cases of abnormally aggressive behaviour for some years, but often prefer to use one of the group with a more sedative action than Prozac.

Too many apples may be more upsetting to the gut

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Pioneer poet of the American wilderness

The life of E. Annie Proulx is almost as magical and exotic as her fiction. At an age when most people are settling for a slow retirement, she is engaged in a fever of activity: rising at 4am to write, skiing, hunting, canoeing, building and hiking. "Oh, and mountain-biking," she crows in, with no trace of irony. "I've recently taken up mountain-biking. It's terrific fun." It is worth pausing to remember that this is a woman soon to celebrate her 62nd birthday.

Proulx (pronounced to rhyme with Crewe) is accurately acclaimed as a pioneer spirit, a writer from the frontier for whom the great outdoors is a redemptive arena. She lives alone in a large, echoing house high up in the Rockies at Wyoming. The air is thin and bracing there; from her front porch she can see for miles. She loves the rugged terrain and the extremes of the climate. There is snow on the ground for at least eight months of the year, and for much of the time there is a big, dipping wind.

After three failed marriages and many restless years roaming across America, Proulx feels settled in Wyoming and is enjoying a period of

E. Annie Proulx wrote her first novel at the age of 56 — and has been winning awards ever since. Her latest book was shortlisted for the Orange Prize. Interview by Jason Cowley



Late starter: E. Annie Proulx hopes she will live long enough to complete "all those books stacked up in my head"

'I am not a money person. I pay myself a not very staggering salary and I live very modestly. It's there but I don't use it'

remarkably sustained creativity. Her visit to London coincides with the appearance of her new novel, *Accordion Crimes*, which was shortlisted for the Orange Prize. She strides into the foyer of her central London hotel with an intimidating vigour and purpose. Tall and big-boned, she carries herself like a man. Her handshake is firm.

Though it is a hot, humid afternoon, she is dressed entirely in black, down to the frames of her wire-rimmed spectacles. She has the pallor of Andy Warhol, her blonde eyebrows incongruous beneath her dark fringe. She has (unfairly) been tagged an awkward customer, one who unashamedly terminates interviews if asked a "banal or idiotic" question. Such as? "Oh, I don't know," she says. "Something like, 'what is this book about?'" Oh dear, there goes my next question.

A woman of paradoxes, Proulx craves solitude but also surrounds herself with a close network of friends — people who share her exuberance and violent energy. "My friends are the kind of people who step over borders, move in and out of several languages easily," she says.

"They are people who keep residence in gritty places and like music and food and cooking; people who have lots of boyfriends and girlfriends and are always entangled and in libellous situations. These are the kind of people I like, and this is the kind of life I have."

Proulx speaks as she writes: in tumbling torrents of words. She is a writer in a hurry, haunted by lost time, the years she spent "doing things that I never wanted to do, things like getting married". She feels the lost years like a burden. "I came to writing late and am racing to get everything down; my head is full of stories."

Asked about her marriages, she becomes shy and evasive. "I always hated domestic situations. I don't think I was a particularly good or diligent mother [she has four adult children]. I grew up at a time when you were supposed to get married and I guess I was a slow learner. It took me a long time for the obvious to become obvious: I could not operate in a conventional family."

"When you are in a domestic situation, you can't go up in the middle of the night, turn the music on and start writing; or go to bed in the middle of the afternoon. So it wasn't

until my last child left home — when I had no responsibilities beyond myself — that I began writing."

As a result, her first novel, *Postcards*, was not published until she was 56. It is about a man who kills his girlfriend, buries her body on the family farm and then flees from his gully secret. Like all of her books, it features a long, anguished journey across America. For Proulx, America remains a "vast continent of discovery", a vessel of migration and new beginning.

Postcards, though full of good things, offered no hint of what was to

come. For Proulx's second book, *The Shipping News*, is one of those rare things: a narrative so fresh and unexpected that its author's life is utterly transformed by it.

Abig, sprawling, exuberant treat of a book, it is set in Newfoundland and concerns the struggles of Quoyle, a bumbling journalist, as he brings up his children after his adulterous wife is killed in a car smash.

The real subject of the book, though, is Newfoundland, a wilderness of winds, ice and fog. Proulx's descriptive writing has a disconcerting power; her book reads like an

elegy to a vanished world. "The force of contemporary life is rushing in on Newfoundland," she says. "The community and way of life I describe in the novel is already disappearing."

The Shipping News won many major fiction prizes, including the Pulitzer, US National Book Award and the *Irish Times* Award. It was translated into 20 languages and sold about three million copies worldwide, a figure more usually associated with a pop record. Proulx is humbly flummoxed by its success. "People tell me that I have a global readership, but I just can't explain

why: I just don't get it. I expected the book to sell no more than a thousand copies."

The fortune she must have earned is invested in a trust fund for her children. "I am not a money person," she says. "I pay myself a not very staggering salary and I live very modestly. So it's there, but I don't use it. It's not my thing."

Accordion Crimes spans 100 years and follows the fortunes of five generations of immigrants. They are linked by a green accordion, which serendipitously passes from hand to hand, across the country and down the years. The book is constructed on an epic scale, rather like America itself. There is music and dance, murder and mayhem.

It is exhausting to read — precisely because Proulx has inexhaustible energy. There is no risk that she will not take. No facet of life in which she is not interested. "The book is an examination of the American obsession with self-discovery, with self-invention," she says. "In no other country is it given that you will reinvent yourself — and you can. I mean, you can change your face, your shape, your state, your name, even

'My friends are people who keep residence in gritty places; people who have lots of boyfriends and girlfriends'

your relatives. I find this rather intriguing and wonder if the seminal point of departure for this whole attitude wasn't the immigrant experience, where people were forced, as soon as they set foot on shore, to start reinventing themselves."

Proulx knows all about self-reinvention. Born in August 1935, she grew up in rural Vermont. Her Québécois father was a travelling tentmaker; her mother a resolute Yankee. Her early years were marked by constant upheaval and movement. She was the eldest of five sisters and her peripatetic childhood left her with an inability to put down roots. She dropped out of various colleges, had "terrible marriages", drifted and travelled, brought up her children in poverty while all the time harbouring a "secret desire" to write.

Proulx refuses to acknowledge that there is a streak of obsessiveness in her character, despite the contradiction in her reply: "I'm not obsessed with writing," she says. Then, in the next breath, she explains that she is simultaneously working on three books — a novel, a novella and a collection of stories — that she travels across the country compiling thousands of pages of research material for each book, and frequently becomes hooked on certain writers so that she "gorges on their work until I feel sick with excess."

"You know, the best part of writing *Accordion Crimes* was that it gave me a chance to roam about America listening to music for a year or two," she says.

"To get the background right for the Tex-Mex section, for instance, I hung out in Texas with my friend Pat Jasper. Together we went down to the nightclubs in Houston, San Antonio and Austin and we just went for it. I gathered so much material that I had to leave 90 per cent of it out of the book. I had a great time, though."

After what she calls the "fabulous distraction" of her visit to London, Proulx is anxious to return to Wyoming and to her writing. Time spent away from her desk is wasted time. For E. Annie Proulx waited so long to become a writer that her greatest fear is that she will die before she can complete "all those books that I've got stacked up in my head."

• *Accordion Crimes* is published by Fourth Estate, £6.99.

Confronting the ghosts of Berlin's past

Eva Figes returned to Germany in search of her lost childhood

I have just come back from a very special week in Berlin, the city where I was born. I left it in the spring of 1939, shortly before my seventh birthday. My father was a well-to-do businessman, my parents were thoroughly assimilated Jews and I had never been to a synagogue in my life. I remember a life of servants, a yacht on Havel, my nursemaid taking me to the zoo almost daily. I did not know that my father had already been in a concentra-

sensitivity we were shown. On our arrival we were each given a huge dossier of information, not just details of the programme for the week, but addresses which would enable us to find out about Jewish deportations, or to claim belated restitution. And the programme of events also showed a balance between a celebration of our return and a solemn recognition of the dreadful events that had driven us out of our homeland.

Many German Jews profess to loathe Germany, but most of us have very mixed feelings. Distrust, yes, but also curiosity, and a yearning to revisit the scenes of lost childhood and youth. Because of the circumstances of our expulsion, this homesickness is more powerful and painful than normal nostalgia for the dim and distant past.

I did what I had to do, what I had been putting off for far too long. On a grey, rainy morning I went to the Jewish Community Library just off the Kurfürstendamm and asked to consult the memorial book for Berlin deportees. And there it was in black and white: Emil Cohen, likewise Ella Cohen, deported on April 2, 1942, to Travniki, Place

of death, Travniki, *Verschollen*. Missing, lost. The word appears against almost every name in the massive, horribly heavy volume. A place of mass shootings. One question answered, many more to go.

After I left the Jewish Library I sat for a long time under the blue stained glass dome of the new Memorial Church which stands only yards from my childhood home. I cried, and it was not the only occasion during that week that I cried.

But I also walked the streets for hours, searching for familiar landmarks. I bought chocolate ladybirds for my grandchildren, the sort I had been given as a child. And, on a sunny afternoon shortly before it was time to come home, I went to the zoo, and heard the voices of children speaking a language I still understood, and felt, if only for the moment, at peace.

• The Knot, by Eva Figes, is published by Minerva, £6.99.



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We can have more bangs for our bucks

Give Labour's defence review a fair wind, urges David Hart

When announcing his defence review last week, George Robertson, the new Secretary of State, said that he intended to use outside specialists and sought consensus across the political spectrum. For the past four years I have advised two Defence Secretaries: Malcolm Rifkind and Michael Portillo. Although I am an outsider, I have not yet received the call from Mr Robertson. Perhaps he feels that including me in any group hoping to achieve consensus is beyond even new Labour. Accordingly, I offer a few thoughts here.

Although some of my friends at the ministry will disagree, there is no shortage of money in the defence budget. There is no need even to consider reducing commitments on budgetary grounds because there is still plenty of scope for further efficiencies and modernisation. The Defence Costs Study, which was a considerable success but could have been taken significantly further, needs to be taken to its next, logical stage — a renewed effort to find efficiency savings coupled with radical reform of management processes.

First, a yardstick needs to be created and continually refined to measure how well the budget is being spent. That will be resisted by many senior officials. Even so, it must be done. The only sensible measure is ratio of budget to war-fighting capability. In other words, a measure of how much bang we actually get for our buck. Some may argue that there are imponderables that cannot be measured, such as the morale of fighting troops. But there are already effective ways to measure military capability in use in the MoD now.

Mr Rifkind set up an operational audit group which reported directly to him and subsequently to Mr Portillo. Its task was to report on actual rather than paper capability. Both found it invaluable. The organisation, while praised by the more intelligent officials, made some enemies because it revealed embarrassing weaknesses.

It is absolutely vital that it is not shunted into the wilderness. Mr Robertson needs to love it and use it not only to audit operational capability but also, with help from financial experts, to start to actually measure how well the ministry converts its budget.

The ministry has not been a good procurer and has been a worse maintainer. Wherever possible, risk should be transferred to the private sector. That means watertight fixed-price contracts for equipment and maintenance. Why not privatise the Procurement Executive and pay it a performance-related fee for each procurement? And all large maintenance operations should be done by the private sector, too.

There will be considerable resistance, particularly from the RAF, which likes to maintain its own aircraft. But it has

not been an efficient user of taxpayers' money. It does need a core of maintainers who are capable of being deployed into operational theatres where civilians cannot go. RAF personnel should be contracted to private-sector companies that provide maintenance to the MoD so that they are available for such deployment. The Royal Navy already has all its ships refitted by the private sector including its most prized Trident submarines.

The relationship between ministers and decision-making also needs urgent attention. There is far too little transparency. One glaring example is where senior officers, with the help of civil servants, conduct inter-service trades. The business is done with great delicacy. An officer in the outer office of the chief of one Service will have a quiet word with an officer in the outer office of the chief of another Service. His man is not averse to the first chief's proposal for a particular equipment; could he possibly help with a proposal that is close to the heart of his own chief?

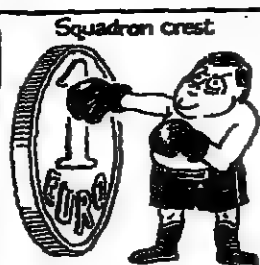
The bargain is struck, the papers are written and the separate decisions are presented to ministers on separate occasions for their approval. Ministers have no idea that a trade has taken place. The papers that they are given are often brilliantly argued and may leave out facts and arguments that do not help the case, so the poor ministers have little choice but to agree.

The size of the management apparatus is another cause of concern. There are still more civil servants than there are men and women in the Army. One area ripe for reduction is in the accounting departments. The traditional way of policing budgets is either for the centre to retain control, or for the Civil Service to scrutinise all significant spending decisions made by military officers. Both inhibit proper management. One officer told me that he felt as though he were surrounded by a "cloud of electrons".

All budgets should be properly delegated with full authority. That one step would save hundreds of millions of pounds annually. And the scrutiny function should finally be abandoned and replaced by an annual audit, just as in the private sector. It will, of course, be resisted on the grounds of accountability to Parliament. In fact, private-sector companies are much more accountable than military budget holders.

For Mr Robertson to seek a bipartisan approach is thoroughly welcome, except apparently to the Conservative Opposition, which I regret. The defence of the realm is the highest duty of government and if it could be taken out of the political cockpit there would be greater stability in the Armed Forces. Mr Robertson has a great opportunity. Although he will be told that it is impossible, if he is bold he can save money and increase our fighting capability.

The private sector should have to take the risk



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5.11.97
Peter Brookes

Europe on the defensive

As our anxious continent turns to the Left to create a comfort zone, we can only become even less competitive

Perhaps in next year's A-level economics paper the examiners will be asking the Guigou question. The French Socialist Government wants to stop French car manufacturers shedding labour. The aim of this policy is to halt the rise of unemployment. What are the likely economic consequences of such a policy?

The correct "Anglo-Saxon" answer to such a question would be: "The Guigou policy will raise unemployment, for two reasons: first, it will prevent French companies from raising levels of productivity in their existing plants, and will therefore make French cars less competitive; secondly it will encourage French companies to make new production investments in foreign countries where there are no such restraints on improving productivity." The correct "French" answer would be: "This policy will contribute to the social welfare of Europe by preventing the destruction of European jobs."

There is no doubt that this is Elizabeth Guigou's approach to employment policy. She is a powerful figure in the French Socialist Party, a former Minister for European Affairs. She has attacked Renault for the decision to close the Vil Voordere factory in Belgium. Her line has been supported by a colleague's attack on Peugeot for laying off workers in France. The reason that Renault and Peugeot are having to lay off these workers is that the French car market has collapsed. A fall of more than 20 per cent this year is expected to be followed by a further fall of over 10 per cent in the next 12 months.

French socialists still believe that "the Anglo-Saxons" — by which they mean all those who accept free-market economics — are wrong, or at any rate that France is an exception. They think that Europe has a superior social economic tradition, and that interventions to protect producers from changes in the marketplace are both effective and good for society. It is not surprising that the French socialists believe this: all the socialist used to believe it, as do many liberal Democrats in the United States, and many Christian Democrats and left-wing conservatives in Europe.

Socialism was driven back in the 1990s only by the success of the Thatcher revolution in Britain, by the retreat from socialism in countries as far apart as China and Sweden, and,

most of all, by the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

By 1990, many people thought that socialism, as a theory of economic organisation, was dead. But of course it is not. Socialism offers a systematic preference for the interest of producers, in this case the car workers, against that of consumers, in this case car buyers. Over time, it is in the interest of all producers to satisfy their customers, but in the short term the producer may well vote to be protected from competition. Socialism is sympathetic to this claim for protection. The effect of socialist intervention is to slow down the response to changes in consumer demand, expressed through markets; indeed, it slows the whole process of specialisation of function and division of labour which allows economic advance to take place. Socialism is an anti-economic force, but it can be a popular one, particularly in a society in decline.

When a society turns to socialism, it means that it has gone on the defensive; the producer no longer equates competition with opportunity, but with danger. The French do indeed see the global market as a threat. Societies go on the defensive when they feel they are being outperformed by their competitors, and socialism seems to be a natural response. It is therefore a danger signal.

In the past month parties of the Left have won elections in Britain and France. The French Socialists are real

socialists, and they are going to be in coalition with the Communists. They believe that the French State can impose what they regard as social justice, that it has the right to take half the national income in taxes, and that it can impose its will on industry. The British Labour Party is no longer like that. Fortunately it is more socialist in its traditions than in its current beliefs. Nevertheless, even new Labour was elected as the party of the Left.

These two elections have taken the balance of the European Union far to the socialist or social democratic side.

As the table below shows, there are now ten social democratic parties which are in power either on their own, or as the leaders of coalition. Three more are junior parties in a coalition, though no one can forecast whether the Irish Labour Party will survive in office after the forthcoming election. The only two countries where the socialist parties are not in office are Germany and Spain. The last fortnight has seen the German Government in disarray: there is no certainty that Chancellor Kohl will win the elections which are due next year. The European Union is now uncomfortably close to being a social democratic zone.

In Britain, we can take some comfort from the fact that our social democratic party is new Labour. Tony Blair has undoubtedly understood the nature of the competitive global economy, and has accepted the main themes of the Thatcher revolution, though no one can forecast

the same can be said of the Dutch Labour Party, and of at least some leading German Social Democrats. Yet we should not take too much comfort from that. As Europe has swung so far to the Left, European policy is bound to be influenced by the ideas of the Left. Even a Blair government, in the middle of a socialist Europe, is going to be influenced by the policies of its partners. The Blair government will not go Guigou itself, but will have to adjust to some extent to the Guigouism of the French socialists.

Europe would not have gone socialist in this way, against the tide of late 20th-century history, unless the European Right had made great mistakes. Maastricht went far to destroying the European parties of the Right by making them seem, or actually to be, the enemies of national prosperity. Yet even without Maastricht, Europe in the 1990s would have been falling the test of competitiveness. In terms of growth, it has fallen behind Asia. In terms of export competitiveness and financial strength, it has fallen behind Japan. In terms of technology, Europe has fallen behind the United States. It is a disastrous record. Is it any wonder that the EU is the unemployment blackspot of the industrial world?

The danger is that the socialist response to Europe's failure of competitiveness will make Europe progressively less competitive, that it will create a downward spiral of economic decline. Writing in 1936, the Austrian economist, Ludwig von Mises observed: "The facts which are present in practically all the examples brought forward of the ageing of a culture are a decline in population, a diminution of welfare, and the decay of towns." In at least their early stages, these ominous signs can be seen in our European culture. Yet socialism, even in the form of social democracy, is the most ominous sign of all.

One has only to compare the economy of East Germany with that of West Germany at the time of unification to see the economic consequences of full-scale socialism. Even social democracy is both a response to decline and a cause of further decline. France has voted to go on the defensive, but the continent of Europe cannot shut out the real world of competition.

William Rees-Mogg

THE LEFT IN EU STATES

IN POWER	COALITION LEADERS	COALITION MINORITY	IN OPPOSITION
Sweden Portugal Greece Italy Britain France	Denmark Austria Finland The Netherlands	Ireland Luxembourg Belgium	Germany Spain

Written off

NOT SINCE the voters of Tatten handed Martin Bell his mandate as the constituency's new MP has Neil Hamilton suffered such a rebuff. After sending begging letters to all manner of London literary agents, he has received a sackful of rejections.

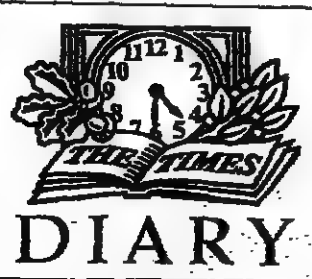
This bodes ill for a man who said in defeat: "I am no longer an MP, then I will have to gain my income from books and journalism."

A flurry of radio and television appearances immediately after the election was followed by a foolhardy appearance with his terrifying wife Christine on *Have I Got News for You*. Hamilton's new tack is to pursue the promise of the written word.

At a party to celebrate the 50th birthday of Pan, the publishers, a number of literary agents confirmed that they had been approached by Hamilton. Furthermore, none of them admitted to signing him up.

Yesterday, at his London home — the Cheshire house is reportedly going to be offered for sale — Christine was dismissive of inquiries: "If Neil wants to talk to you about it, he will phone you."

Presumably, Hamilton proposes to write "the truth" about the



Tatten campaign. One agent who rejected Hamilton's advances suggested an alternative title: *Neil Hamilton's Guide to Sleaze*.

Royal rebuff

THE ROYAL Family measures its Sunday afternoon tea, but the Duke of Kent's reaction to an application by a restaurant neighbouring St James's Palace to allow a jazz band to play on Sunday afternoons seems extreme.

The Duke, with the support of his local friends, has written to Westminster Council to object to a planned relaxation in "the music and entertainment licence" by The Avenue restaurant, a haunt of par-

liamentarians and rock stars.

"If we were opening a topless go-go joint, I would understand," said Christopher Bodker, the proprietor. "But all we are planning is some jazz on a Sunday lunchtime." The Duke is seldom present at his St James's office on a Sunday, but his henchman confirmed yesterday that he was against the extension.

"Like all the other objectors, he considers this to be the street of kings," he said. Westminster Council, which admits that such a forceful objection from a member of the Royal Family is unusual, is considering the case today.

In favour

TWO years after he cut back on his public fundraising for the Labour Party, Ken Follett, the novelist, is back in favour. Once the fulcrum of Neil Kinnock's champagne socialist sex, he faded under Tony Blair's regime. With his wife Barbara now an MP, however, Follett has been having meetings with David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, about promoting literacy in schools and making 1998 the Year of Reading.

The Department for Education was unwilling to provide any further information on the meetings. Perhaps the renewed relationship still needs work.

AFTER his dinner with Tony Blair at the pretentious Pont de la Tour in London last week, Bill Clinton was back on the heavy stuff yesterday as Chancellor Kohl arrived in Washington. The two were planning to return to Filomena's, a traditional Italian restaurant in Georgetown, where they ate in 1994. That time, the two men got through carpaccio, marinated seafood, a selection of cheeses and cured meats, crab stuffed mushrooms, battered shrimp in orange sauce, sautéed squid, ravioli filled with spinach and veal, and zabaglione in mar-

sala to finish. This time, says the White House, the President is on a diet and it will be more of a working supper. Neither they, nor the restaurant, however, will be making the same mistake of revealing the menu.

Beat that...

YESTERDAY evening saw the launch of an extraordinary new book, *Woman Behind Bars in Romania*, by Annie Samuelli, a Romanian imprisoned in her own country for 12 years after the Second World War. Now 38, and living in Paris, Mrs Samuelli tells the true story of her incarceration and that of her fellow prisoners in Romania's awful women's prisons.

One story in particular catches the eye. A woman arrived in the jail one day, having been beaten all over her back by her guards. Yet she was beaming beatifically. "Why are you so happy?" asked her fellow prisoners. "When I was young, I had a handsome lover who would do the same thing to me," she replied. "When they beat me, I was reminded of him."

Beirne out

ONE of Grub Street's best-known paparazzi is leaving London for Los Angeles. Brendan Beirne, who



The Princess's confrontation

specialised in pictures of celebrities pushing him away, was the man attacked by Diana, Princess of Wales, when he took pictures of her outside a gym last Easter. She strode over and demanded his film. When he refused, Diana solicited the help of a rugged passer-by to half-nelson him and grab the film. Not that this had anything to do with his departure.

P.H.S

Not bad, for lotto clottos

Have faith in our charities, says

Magnus Linklater

Charity begins at home is one of the bleaker Victorian expressions. It smacks of purged lips and parochialism. Like many a grim Christian stricture it was coined by St Paul: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house," he wrote in his Epistle to Timothy, "he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The National Lottery has attracted numerous insults since it was set up. "Fat cats" is the latest — but has not so far been called an infidel. That may come. A hail of abuse has landed on the lottery's charities board for giving £25 million to projects abroad. A grant for tree-planting in the Solomon Islands caused particular offence, but aid for economic self-reliance in Uganda, and educating the children of Bedouin Arabs were among the grants subjected to ritual invective.

The Sun led the chase in characteristic style. It set up an instant hotline and got 30,000 readers to protest. "Lotto Clotto" was the disconcerting headline it used to describe the board's spokesman. The *Daily Mail* piled it on: "Lottery Cash Goes Abroad," it complained. "UK children suffer while money goes to palm trees project in the Solomons." The mood was caught on the BBC when one of the panelists on *Any Questions*, attacked the notion of sending money abroad. "Charity in this instance definitely begins at home," he said to loud applause.

Any Questions has a knack of reflecting Middle England at its most chauvinist, or, to pinch a rather good phrase of George Melly's, "strutting the cracked Pavlovian song." More worrying is the possibility that it may chime as well with the Government's own thinking. It is clear from the wholesale assault on the directors of Camelot by the Heritage Secretary, Chris Smith, that the current operations of the National Lottery itself are in the firing line.

A White Paper, promised for next month, will outline government thinking which at this stage shows no evidence of enthusiasm for the status quo. Instead, there are plans for the midweek lottery to be diverted into new ventures such as a "Peoples' Lottery", which sounds more like an engine for social change than a means of enhancing the life of the nation.

Ministers should, however, curb their more rapacious instincts and look coolly at what the lottery has achieved before tearing it apart. Whatever their faults, the directors of Camelot have delivered a highly efficient operation, with profits greatly exceeding initial estimates. The money has benefited worthwhile causes, from brass bands to community arts centres (I quickly declare an Arts Council interest, but plead the defence of factual reporting), as well as refurbishing crumbling museums and helping to build Britain's nascent film industry. They represent a Peoples' Lottery in everything but name.

And so, too, do the tree-planters of the Solomon Islands. There, the rainforests have been almost wiped out by foreign logging companies, with devastating effects on the environment. A sum of about £20,000 is not much, but it will go to help families manage their local forests, replanting on a modest scale to begin redressing the balance and perhaps rescuing a fragile ecology.

To claim that no one in Britain who buys a lottery ticket is interested in the plight of a few distant islanders is the height of arrogance. In my experience of newspaper campaigns, only cancer and children's outwreath foreign causes in eliciting support. Certainly in Scotland, the response to disasters abroad has been heartfelt. Regular convoys of lorries carried aid to Bosnia throughout the war, and continue to do so in its aftermath, funded entirely by Scottish donations. In Britain as a whole, 15 per cent of all charity donations already go to help causes abroad — the largest single area of charity giving.

The Charities Board, vilified by the tabloid press (and the occasional Tory minister) ever since it was launched, has in fact turned out to be one of the National Lottery's great success stories. Luke Fitzherbert, of the Directory of Social Change, highly critical of some of the lottery's other branches, believes it has done "a bloody good job", largely because it has brought detailed and objective assessment procedures to the previously haphazard system of giving. Its guidelines require it to be fair to every region, and even-handed in supporting different areas of charity work.

Those guidelines also join it to help UK charities working abroad, and the £25 million it committed last week represents about 5 per cent of the total. So far it has given £500 million to nearly 8,000 charities in Britain — not bad for a "lotto clotto". The Government should avoid making hasty changes to the lottery set-up. It should take a long look at what is working well within the organisation, rather than condemning it wholesale. And it should, above all, resist the temptation to be parochial. As one of the board members put it: "Charity may begin at home, but it doesn't necessarily end there."

The Folletts in Labour's bosom



THE CLARKE WAGON

Dorrell climbs on board: others poke spokes in the wheels

The first casualty of the Conservative leadership campaign came yesterday, before blood could even be shed. Facing a humiliatingly low vote in next Tuesday's first ballot, Stephen Dorrell concluded that he would do better to withdraw now and throw his support behind Kenneth Clarke. Whether he can nudge his small band of supporters in the same direction remains to be seen.

The two men made much yesterday of the "new unity" that this action symbolised. All it actually represented was a unifying of the Left. Had Mr Clarke's prize new supporter been Peter Lilley, it would have been another matter. But, for the moment at least, the voting map does not need to be redrawn. All that has happened is that Mr Clarke may now win second preference votes in the first ballot that would otherwise have come to him the following week.

The Shadow Chancellor's stock, however, seems to be rising. In the country he is clearly the most popular potential leader. His personality is bigger and more rumbustious than those of his rivals. He is engagingly frank and has proved his combativeness in the Commons. He also possesses great resilience, a vital requirement for opposition.

In Parliament, now that he is the only candidate on the Left, Mr Clarke can be assured of support from his natural constituency. But there are some MPs in the centre and on the Right who are leaning towards him too. Some believe that he will be the most effective leader in Opposition, and that he will not have a chance to put his unsound views on Europe into action in Government. Others, of a generation that might just still be able to hold ministerial office, are prepared to put ideological differences aside in order to have a chance, any chance, of serving in Government again. They console themselves that events in France and Germany make EMU ever less likely; and

that, if monetary union does come about, it will be under the "fudged" criteria that Mr Clarke is prepared to oppose.

But what if EMU goes ahead and is judged by its supporters to be a success? What would Mr Clarke do in Opposition if the Government decided to join? Worse, what might he do in Government? These questions should be asked by all those who believe that the single currency is the most important matter for this Parliament and the next. Mr Clarke tried to play EMU down at his press conference yesterday, denying that it was critical either in this leadership election or for the next five years.

Disdain for the views of others is Mr Clarke's most dangerous weakness. He does not just disagree with the majority of his party; he wishes they did not exist. Yet the tide in the Tory party is running away from him. If he cannot reach an accommodation with the Right, he will never unite the party.

In this respect, his position resembles that of Denis Healey in 1980. Mr Healey, a moderate, would certainly have been a more electable leader of the Labour Party than Michael Foot. But he would have no truck with the views of the Left, which was then in the ascendant. It took 14 years for the tide in the party to run in Tony Blair's direction.

Indeed, if Mr Clarke were to lead the Conservative Party, he might well find himself to the left of Mr Blair on key issues. It looks as if the Prime Minister will be true to his word in introducing radical reforms to the welfare state, an institution that Mr Clarke defends as if the design of 1945 could not be improved upon. The Shadow Chancellor shows an inflexible attachment to ideas formed in the 1960s — especially on Europe — that he seems quite unwilling to reassess in the light of events. But then, had he been prepared to adjust his sights on Europe three years ago, he would be leader of the Conservative Party by now.

BLAIR'S CHINESE BOX

The Prime Minister should go to Hong Kong — and speak out

For China, the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty at midnight on June 30 is an occasion for national celebration. It will also be an important international rite of passage for China, Britain and above all Hong Kong itself, witnessed by Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, and 4,000 other dignitaries as well as the world's press. China's most senior ministers have said that they want the atmosphere to be friendly, hinting at their hopes of a "fresh start" in Sino-British relations. A cordial relationship with China is equally in the interests both of Britain and of Hong Kong.

The Chinese would like Tony Blair to be there. So would Hong Kong's people. But Mr Blair's diary for the day remains blank. His final decision has been complicated by a late change of plan announced by Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive designate, which puts Britain in an extremely awkward position.

Up to midnight, the Hong Kong Government has laid on an uncontentious programme of military parades, local entertainments and a banquet presided over by the Prince of Wales. Nor is there any problem with the formal handover ceremony at midnight. Mr Blair should not be swayed by the continuing uncertainty as to whether President Jiang Zemin will lead the Chinese delegation. Responsibilities take precedence over protocol.

The problem exercising Downing Street and the Foreign Office arises after the Prince of Wales and Chris Patten, the Governor, then leave and ministers, diplomats and guests move to a different hall for the final Chinese events. What was expected was the swearing in of Mr Tung, his Executive Council and senior judges and civil servants; but added to this will now be the official inauguration of the provisional legislature appointed to take over from the Legislative

Council elected in 1995, which China has decided to abolish.

Unless the plan is changed, British ministers cannot be present — as Robin Cook has already made clear. To stay would make them a party to legitimising a body which Britain maintains has no legal standing either under the 1984 Sino-British treaty or in China's Basic Law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, both of which say that its legislature shall be elected. Since the United States has also condemned the dismantling of Hong Kong's elected legislature, Ms Albright is in the same position as Britain and will leave early.

This move reflects the lack of confidence that China has shown about Hong Kong since Tiananmen, remembered last night in Hong Kong by a 60,000-strong crowd. China has no need to make a point about sovereignty. If it is concerned to avoid a legal vacuum, the swearing-in of the Chief Executive suffices. To have pushed the provisional legislature into the limelight in this way is as unwise as it is unnecessary. China itself has promised early fresh elections to find a replacement, a tacit acceptance of the problem with its makeshift response to Hong Kong's electoral reforms.

Britain cannot stop the new administration from proceeding; but China cannot escape the awkward consequences. Wisdom lies in minimising the damage: were the Chinese to respond, for example, by boycotting the earlier events, the new Hong Kong will make a thoroughly inauspicious start. That is a matter for China. Mr Blair should go to Hong Kong but he should also do more. It is an occasion to speak out firmly about his belief in civil liberties, the rule of law and a credible, accountable legislature — the foundations of Hong Kong's success. At this historic moment, the British Prime Minister should be both seen and heard.

THE FINEST FISHERBIRD

The British cormorant escapes the European net

Thousands of years after the trick was first perfected, Asian fishermen still lean over the prows of their boats clutching strings knotted to the legs of cormorants. So efficient are these birds at catching fish that a well-stocked reservoir can be emptied in a few winter weeks by hungry flocks. Anglers see cormorants as the "vultures of the water" and are quick to pronounce anathemas on their competitors for the river's catch. Indeed, angling magazines are full of fishermen's tales not only of the ones that got away but of those snatched away in a flash of feathers. Only when the *Angling Times* declared in a headline that "These Birds Must be Killed", did the authorities step in. Almost all birds in Britain are legally protected, and the former editor has been charged with incitement to kill cormorants.

But celebrations by ornithologists have been soured by a decision in Brussels that anglers hope may yet open a chink in the legal armour protecting the cormorant. A scientific committee has decided that the continental cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* — whose numbers have soared from 5,000 in 1979 to more than 100,000 today — no longer needs the majesty of a European directive to keep it alive.

The special regime which enjoins governments to protect the bird's habitat is to be ended. *Carbo sinensis* is no longer a

fisherman with a clear stretch of water. Britain has long had its own cormorant optimum. Our island coastal cormorants, *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*, like the human species, are a breed apart and have evaded the net of legislation cast from Brussels. They will remain protected under national law, and Britain is free to prosecute all who would do them harm.

Anglers are a powerful lobby, with almost more clout than the combined bureaucracies of Brussels and Whitehall. They insist that our native cormorants are encroaching on inland waters as aggressively as a European functionary who has espied a new activity to regulate. Not a river or lake, reservoir or hatchery is now safe from their depredations. Politicians, they say, have tried to put clear, blue water between Britain and those who would control this island's environment; but clear, blue water for a cormorant is an invitation to a fine feast.

The guardians of the countryside, however, are not to be swayed. Britain has a fine record in protecting its wildlife, in hedgerows or in the air. Cormorants have been lured inland by anglers stocking lakes and rivers with more fish than nature would otherwise provide. Who can blame nature's finest fisherman, whose speed and grace outstrips the sedentary human, for taking advantage of this new abundance?

Priorities for new Tory party leader

From Mr J. E. Hilliard

Sir, Last week's letter from seven former Conservative MPs (May 30) suggests that the prime duty of the party leader is to get them or their successors back into the House.

In truth the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition has the infinitely more important task of marshalling, in the most telling manner possible, arguments against the government measures perceived not to be in the national interest.

Fitness to fill that role should determine the choice of leader. There are, immediately and for the future, matters of greater weight than the chance of success at a general election in five years' time.

Yours truly,
JOHN HILLIARD,
30 Gales Drive,
Three Bridges,
Crawley, West Sussex,
June 1.

From Mr Robert Rodwell

Sir, Sir Jim Lester and others, do not seem to have fully accepted why they, and many other former Conservative Members of Parliament, lost their seats on May 1.

They were not voted out on economic issues. Britain's recent performance is excellent. They lost crucial traditional support because of the Conservative Party's failure to recognise the deep public disquiet over the EU's federalist ambitions.

It is no coincidence that three of the signatories — Peter Butler (Milton Keynes North East), Tim Rathbone (Lewes) and Mark Robinson (Somerset and Frome) — lost their seats as a direct result of the intervention of the Referendum Party.

Those Conservatives who voted for their Referendum Party opponents would love to return to the fold but are unlikely to do so if the party elect a closet federalist as their leader and select like-minded people as their candidates for the next election.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT RODWELL,
(Referendum Party candidate,
Somerset and Frome),
Lamyatt Lodge,
Nr Shepton Mallet, Somerset,
June 1.

From Mr Phillip Oppenheim

Sir, Conservative disunity was a key reason for Labour's victory on May 1. Internal arguments obscured our growing economic success and prevented us from countering Labour's effective but spurious sound-bite policies.

That is a mistake we must not repeat. I recognise that people have strong views on Europe — I share many of them. But we must now look forward, not backward. The new Conservative leader must make his priority the issues which concern ordinary people — education, health, law and order and, above all, the economy.

All the available candidates for the leadership have excellent qualities. I have been fortunate enough to work as a minister for Michael Portillo and Ian Lang. But I also worked with Ken Clarke as a minister or his PPS over seven years and in four departments, so I have some idea of his qualities.

Apart from his credentials as one of the most consistent free-marketisers in the Conservative Party, Ken Clarke will be seen as the Chancellor who built solidly on achievements of his predecessors to deliver the best economic prospects for generations. Above all, he is a tough fighter who knows how to craft powerful but attractive messages to the people.

Those are qualities needed to rebuild the party. Clear blue water may be enticing and initially bracing, but it can get very cold — especially if there is no firm land to swim to.

Yours faithfully,
PHILLIP OPPENHEIM
(Conservative MP for
Amber Valley, 1983-97),
29 Redburn Street, SW3,
June 3.

From Mr Stephen V. Straker

Sir, Would it be fair to assume that the seven former Tory MPs are in their particular position because they are supporters of Ken Clarke?

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN STRAKER,
Cromden Lodge,
Manor Road, Reigate, Surrey,
June 2.

From the Reverend Anthony West

Sir, In spite of their enthusiasm for Kenneth Clarke as a prospective leader of the Conservative Party, I am afraid that Sir Jim Lester and others do not stand a chance of regaining seats in the House of Commons all the time they continue to use split infinitives ("... to decisively move on..."). In anticipating a new vicar's ascent of the pulpit steps a church warden said to him: "Ten minutes only and no split infinitives."

We have to get our priorities right.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY WEST,
2 Abbotts Walk,
Cerne Abbas, Dorset,
May 30.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XX Telephone 0171-782 5000

Incentives to leave the car at home

From the Editor of New European

Sir, I loved Simon Jenkins's article, "Tear up these roads to ruin" (May 31). The message is almost 40 years overdue but it is good to hear it spelt out loud and clear at last.

I believe there was some question in Brussels a few years ago about putting out a directive banning all cars over 20 years old from being driven on public roads. I tried to say then that if Brussels wanted to do something really good for a change, it would ban all cars under 20 years old.

Some sort of compromise has to be found, and I believe that encouraging people to think of their car as a mode of peripheral transport could help greatly; public transport must be for normal use, and the car perceived as a special treat for special occasions.

Why not give a railroad with every annual car tax disc for the motorist and his family to ride on buses and trains at, say, half fare? That, combined with allowing the price of fuel to go through the roof through taxation if necessary, should provide a pretty effective incentive for most of us to relax and let somebody else ferry us about.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN COLEMAN,
Editor, New European,
14-in Carnon Road, SW5,
June 2.

From the Chief Executive of the Countryside Commission

Sir, Simon Jenkins highlights the national dilemma. We all want the next person to take the bus to reduce the congestion we suffer. We expect to do most of our shopping in supermarkets without stopping to consider how the corner shopkeeper will make the profits he needs to stay in business.

In rural areas exercising choice in education often means driving children to school. How many of us, in the countryside, take on new jobs or choose new homes with any expectation that we will not use the car between the two?

Politics are important in tackling this issue. But so is individual decision-taking. Good planning is a start in getting homes, shops, schools and workplaces well related. But it will deliver no benefit unless people take different decisions as a result.

Countryside Commission research

Employment chapter

From Professor Lord Wedderburn of Charlton, QC, FBA

Sir, The Foreign Secretary has made clear the Government's support for a new "employment chapter" in the EU treaty (Jobs and EMU get equal billing by Cook, Business, May 29).

Such a chapter is expected to include provisions on rights relating to health and safety, information and consultation and protection for those excluded from the labour market.

There is no good reason for it to omit what have come to be called other "core labour rights", such as a ban on forced labour, a right to organise and support for collective bargaining.

That support is already required of member States by other international sources, such as the Council of Europe

Hutton Gallery's fate

From the Director of the National Art Collections Fund

Sir, The threatened closure of the Hutton Gallery by Newcastle University (report, May 31) is a worrying reminder of the precarious funding of our non-national museum collections. The Hutton is a distinguished collection: not only is it a great teaching resource for the university but it is also open to the public free of charge. Closure would fly in the face of the new Heritage Secretary's commitment to education and access.

It would be shameful if such an impressive collection were to close in order to make savings of £45,000 a year. We recognise that the university is facing budgetary cuts of 6 per cent over the next three years, but the gallery's director is confident that, given time, he could raise the necessary funds from other sources.

We hope the university will reconsider what appears to be a hastily-conceived plan, and will enter into consultations on the Hutton's long-term future.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BARRIE,
Director,
National Art Collections Fund,
7 Cromwell Place, SW7,
June 4.

Cherie Blair

From Mr Peter Hitchens

Sir, Not for the first time I am forced to rebut allegations about the Prime Minister's wife and my article, "Why Cherie is no Hillary Clinton" (May 28).

Our connection was brief, if intense. Researches which I conducted over a year ago attracted attention because I was interested not in Cherie Blair's hair, nor her taste in clothes, nor her smile, nor even the court cases in which she appears, but in her political opinions.

Since she has stood for Parliament, made public speeches and has openly

a few years ago showed how much more rural traffic we could expect if the then Government's road traffic forecasts proved to be correct. We therefore embarked on a series of experiments with highway authorities and rural communities to develop practical solutions. We shall publish the results in the autumn.

But all of this will be to little avail unless we all find ways of encouraging people to think differently about car use and to accept a broader social responsibility. That is the real message for the UK.

Yours etc,
RICHARD WAKEFORD,
Chief Executive,
County-side Communities,
John Dover House, Crescent Place,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire,
June 3.

From Mr Anthony Wethered

Sir, Isn't Simon Jenkins being a little unfair to Glenda Jackson and her "Breathe-Easy Week"?

Under the last Government, while the Secretary of State for the Environment was making repeated calls for less dependence on the motor car, his colleagues at the Department of Transport were continuing to pour money into bigger and better roads at the expense of public transport.

What we have now, apparently, is a green Minister of Transport, and a chance therefore of a co-ordinated policy for the benefit of the environment. "Breathe Easy" may be only a small step, but it's a step in the right direction.

Yours sincerely,
ANTHONY WETHERED,
Remunant, West Street,
Marlow, Buckinghamshire,
May 31.

From Mr B. J. Goodchild

Sir, One of the new Government's first moves towards its transport policy objectives should be to reverse, in its forthcoming Budget, the tax regime under which concessions are available for running company cars but not for the purchase of season tickets on public transport.

Yours faithfully,
BARRY GOODCHILD,
36 Hinton Road,
Wallingford, Surrey,
May 31.

Social Charter 1961, article 6, and the International Labour Organisation Conventions No 87 of 1947 and No 98 of 1948.

Measures emanating from the European Commission have so far concentrated upon rights of consultation only. The new employment chapter will do well to introduce both rights to consult and a right to negotiate collectively where a majority of the employees in an employment unit vote for it.

Our own Government would no doubt find itself able to support such a provision in the light of the manifesto commitment to such a right of negotiation, the implementation of which has so far had to be deferred.

Yours sincerely,
WEDDERBURN OF CHARLTON,
29 Woodside Avenue, N6,
May 29.

Personality research

From Mr Tom Heritage

Sir, You report (May 26) that the Medical Research Council (MRC) has granted £640,000 to psychiatrists to "scan the spectrum of human personality" in their hunt for the genes that control depression and anxiety and to research whether these states of mind are inherited.

David Fulker, of the Institute of Psychiatry, says that he's not looking for manic-depressives or schizophrenics, but "relatively normal people who feel down in the mouth occasionally".

I think I can save the MRC its money, and the Institute of Psychiatry a lot of effort. Feeling down in the mouth occasionally is, indeed, genetically passed on.

Feelings of, for instance, inadequacy, low self-esteem, anxieties about money or over-conscientiousness, far from being symptoms of a disorder, are surely perfectly rational responses to particular situations. Perhaps one really is isolated, inadequate or strapped for cash.

There is no pill for what ails these folk. It's called the human condition.

Yours faithfully,
TOM HERITAGE,
Friars, The Crescent,
Thorpe le Soken, Essex,
May 26.

Time for action to clean up world

From the Chairman of the UN Environment and Development UK Committee and others

Sir, June 5 is World Environment Day. Five years ago in Rio world leaders gathered to define a comprehensive action programme for protecting the world's environment and promoting more sustainable development. In two weeks' time they will be meeting again in New York to review progress.

Good things have happened on some topics in some parts of the world. Many local communities and local authorities throughout the world have been extremely active in improving their environments and making a reality of sustainable development. Some businesses have transformed their operations, reducing waste and pollution, providing a good example for what others could do. Some governments have begun to change their policies on energy, transport, agriculture, industry, housing and their fiscal structures.

But a tremendous amount remains to be done. The New York meeting, and the G7 summit in Denver which precedes it, provide a great opportunity for a new political impetus. The preparatory process has identified some of the opportunities. There could be a new global initiative to protect the world's fresh water supplies and make supplies available in the many areas which suffer from drought and water shortage.

There could be agreements to protect the world's forests and oceans; on the way forward to the Kyoto conference later this year, which is intended to reduce the risk of unmanageable climate change; and to find new ways of helping the poorest countries in Africa and elsewhere to achieve real development in a sustainable way.

The technical preparations have largely been made. Now what is needed is the political vision and leadership to catch the imagination of the world and give the whole process a new momentum. The Labour Government has a great opportunity to give a lead in New York.

Yours etc,
DEREK OSBORN,
Chairman, United Nations Environment and Development UK Committee,
ALEXANDER OF WEEDON,
Chairman,
National Westminster Bank plc,
JOHN HARMAN,
Leader, Kirkcaldy Metropolitan Council,
JOHN HOUGHTON,
Chairman, Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution,
FIONA REYNOLDS,
Director, Council for the Protection of Rural England,
RICHARD SANDBROOK,
Director, International Institute for Environment and Development,
c/o United Nations Association - UK,
3 Whitehall Court, SW1,
June 4.

Irish potato famine

From Dr Richard N. Strange

Sir, Should some be misled into thinking that politicians or any other group of people were entirely to blame for the terrible Irish potato famine of the 1840s (reports, June 2), the real devils were a disease of the plant caused by a fungus, *Phytophthora infestans*, and the lack of effective resistance genes in the crop.

At the time, neither was understood since neither the germ theory of disease nor the concept of the gene as the unit of inheritance had gained common currency. It is perhaps worth adding that the structure of the first gene for resistance to a plant disease was established only in 1993.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD N. STRANGE,
(Senior lecturer in plant pathology),
University College London,
Department of Biology,
Darwin Building, Gower Street, WC1,
June 2.

Added ingredients

From Mr Alfred Finer

Sir, You report (May 26) the claim that Israel was sending chewing gum laced with aphrodisiacs to the Palestinian Authority. I would be most obliged to your correspondent in Sharm el Sheikh if he could discover the name of the confection.

Yours faithfully,
ALFRED FINER,
16 Regency House,
Regents Park Road, N3.

Infernal bells

From Mr Peter Knottley

Sir, A daily cyclist for many years, I long ago found on the market a bicycle bell which not only fits neatly below the handlebars (letter, May 31), but can be so attached that it may be used without having to move one's hands from their positions ready to use the brakes.

But I find the main use of a bicycle bell to be that of a greeting to friends and acquaintances seen along the way; should I use it for any other purpose I consider that my roadmanship has been in some way at fault.

Yours sincerely,
PETER KNOTTLEY,
32 Mickleham Gardens,
Cheam, Surrey,
June 3.

THE TIMES

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INSIDE SECTION

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TODAY



ARTS

The Brazilian diva about to storm Drury Lane
PAGES 37-39



TRAVEL

Where to go green on holiday in the Caribbean
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SPORT

Attack proves best means of defence for rampant Lions
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TELEVISION AND RADIO
PAGES 50, 51

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY JUNE 5 1997



Sir Peter Davis, starring here in the Pru's TV advertisement, will head the group charged with sheltering the jobless in work and training schemes

Pru chief to captain welfare-to-work team

By PHILLIP BASNETT AND MARIANNE CURPHEY

SIR Peter Davis, the £612,000-a-year chairman of Prudential Corporation, the insurance group, is to head the task force overseeing Labour's welfare-to-work programme.

He becomes the latest business leader to take a Government post, joining Lord Simons, formerly of BP, Barclays Bank's Martin Taylor and Alan Sugar of Tottenham Hotspur and Amstrad.

The appointment comes as it emerged that Prudential is to spend millions of pounds toughening up proficiency tests for all 5,500 direct sales staff after its training and compliance standards were

criticised by the chief City watchdog. Ministers are particularly pleased to have won the involvement of Sir Peter, who is seen in Whitehall as a coup for David Blunkett, the Employment and Education Secretary. Addressing trade union leaders yesterday, Mr Blunkett called for a new unionism to match the new Government.

Speaking in Brighton to the annual conference of the GMB general union, he said that the new deal programmes "must not be a pale imitation of the make-work schemes of the past" but must instead be "high quality" programmes that would give young people

the opportunity to "learn as well as earn".

Sir Peter will report to the Cabinet sub-committee on welfare-to-work, headed by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and will work closely with Mr Blunkett and Andrew Smith, the Employment Minister. The Government aims to offer private sector jobs to 250,000 young unemployed, to be boosted by a £60-a-week subsidy for each of them, or full-time training, or work on the planned environmental task force.

Sir Peter, who received a £1.25 million pay-off when ousted as chief executive of Reed Elsevier, was paid a

basic salary of £425,000 by Prudential last year. Bonus and benefits made that £612,000, or about £250 an hour. Prudential admitted yesterday that it has been ordered by the Securities and Investments Board (SIB) to retest its entire direct sales force after an inspection this year. The cost of re-testing comes on top of the £1 million a week the insurer currently spends on training. The new tests have to be completed by September.

The inspection was carried out by the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) on behalf of the SIB. Other companies have been inspected and the PIA said it "would not hesitate" to take similar action against other offenders. Prudential was also asked by SIB to defend its sale of the Prudential Savings Account to non-taxpaying customers. SIB suggested other products, such as National Savings schemes and tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas), would have been more suitable for these clients. This is because such policies suffer from the underlying taxation on the company's life fund.

However, Prudential is unable to sell either product and would therefore have gained no commission from the sale.

Commentary, page 29

Mirror plans vehicle to provide cable TV packages

By ERIC REGULY

MIRROR GROUP is in talks to launch a company that would provide TV programming packages to the cable companies in competition with those offered by BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

The company, known internally as the Programme Company, would also endeavor to create a brand that is clearly identified with cable TV and provide marketing services.

Mirror Group, owner of The Mirror newspaper and the Live TV cable channels, is in talks with Flextech, the second largest cable and satellite programmer, about joining Programme Co. Flextech recently formed a joint venture with BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC, to create a family of BBC-themed subscription channels.

Mirror hopes the BBC-Flextech channels will form the core of Programme Co's offering. Money would be raised to buy the rights to other programming and The Mirror would be used to help promote the products.

David Montgomery, chief executive of Mirror Group, confirmed that the concept is being discussed but declined to offer details. Flextech, whose channels include UK Gold and UK Living, would say only that it is open to any deal that would see the maximum value extracted from its new channels. Adam Singer, Flextech's chairman, said: "We would be interested in any proposal that would increase the cable subscriber population."

The support of Cable and Wireless Communications (CWC), the largest cable com-

pany, is crucial to Mirror's plans. CWC was formed in April from the £4.5 billion merger of Mercury Communications and the Nynex. Bell CableMedia and Videotron cable companies. It is 53 per cent owned by C&W and has more than 600,000 cable-TV customers.

The Mirror would like CWC and TeleWest Communications, the second largest cable company, to become equity partners in Programme Co. TeleWest would not comment, but is not thought to be interested. CWC would not comment other than to say it is examining a number of proposals. Currently, CWC and the rest of the cable industry derive the bulk of their TV output from BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times.

Programming executives who have talked to Graham Wallace, chief executive of CWC, said he would only consider deals that would give CWC branding control over the programming and marketing of any new channel packages. CWC is dropping the Mercury name and is planning an extensive marketing campaign to promote the C&W brand.

One of the unknown factors is Programme Co's ability to provide customer service to cable-TV customers. The cable industry's poor customer service record has been cited as one of the main reasons for low take-up rates: only about one in five homes passed by cable takes the service.

Time for action, page 31

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4557.1	(-0.7)
Yield	3.80%	
FTSE All share	2174.47	(+0.06)
Nikkei	20611.56	(+48.40)
Dow Jones	7304.00	(-8.15)
S&P Composite	843.88	(-1.62)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5.44)
Long Bond	96 1/8%	(96.1)
Yield	6.89%	(6.87)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	8 1/4%	(8.44)
Libor long gilt	11 1/2%	(11.2)
Libor (90d)		

STERLING

New York	1.6275	(1.6348)
London		
DM	1.7355	(1.7361)
DM	2.8162	(2.8240)
FF	6.4958	(6.5271)
SF	2.3524	(2.3498)
Yen	181.26	(180.29)
S Index	99.8	(100.0)

DOLLAR

London	1.7355	(1.7270)
FF	5.8259	(5.8240)
SF	1.4478	(1.4370)
Yen	116.29	(116.03)
S Index	102.8	(102.8)

TOKYO CLOSING

Brnt 15-day (Aug)	\$18.95	(\$19.05)
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NORTH SEA OIL

Brnt 15-day (Aug)	\$18.95	(\$19.05)
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GOLD

London close	\$341.95	(\$342.95)
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* denotes midday trading price

Sparks flying
Southern Electric risked angering the Government by promising fresh shareholder returns soon after it has paid the windfall tax. Southern is the only independent regional electricity company. Page 28

Disqualification
The Government will today announce a sharp rise in the number of directors to face disqualification and will unveil tough new rules aimed at protecting consumers when companies go bust. Page 33

Davies tells of EMU risks

By ROBERT MILLER AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

HOWARD DAVIES, the deputy governor of the Bank of England and soon to be head of a beefed-up statutory Securities and Investments Board (SIB), said City firms risked heavy losses if they made the wrong assumptions over the future of monetary union.

He called on them to "undertake rigorous stress testing of their portfolios" to ensure they were not dangerously exposed. In the past 18 months, he said, bond traders had increasingly based deals on calculations involving the convergence criteria for monetary union. Now, with doubts over the feasibility of EMU, banks should reassess their positions in the market, ensuring the adequacy of their risk control systems.

Sterling endured a rocky ride on the foreign exchanges yesterday after Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, gave a strong indication that the Bank believes sterling is overvalued.

Mr George told the International Monetary Conference in Interlaken, Switzerland, the pound currently possessed "an exaggerated strength".

But he also hinted that the Bank was still prepared to raise interest rates because domestic demand is "running a bit above a sustainable rate", fuelled by building society windfall payments.

The market expects a rate rise after the inaugural Monetary Policy Committee meeting which begins today. Economists believe the Bank will put rates up a quarter point to 6.5 per cent when the meeting ends tomorrow lunchtime.

Fresh boost for British business

THE Government yesterday launched a range of initiatives to boost the competitiveness of British business (Philip Bassett writes).

But in her first major speech as President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett rejected the creation of a single regulator on competition issues through the merger of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the Office of Fair Trading. Mrs Beckett said the main consideration in merger cases would be sole competition grounds.

She announced a series of wide-ranging reviews — of the DTI's overall spending, of the incentives provided for small firms, of regulations covering companies' activities, of the promotion of exports and of lifting the broadband restrictions on BT. Beckett's stall, page 28

EU threat to war on insiders

By ROBERT MILLER

THE Stock Exchange gave a warning that the fight against insider dealing could suffer a severe setback if a proposed European Directive on the random taping of telephone calls is introduced.

Gavin Casey, chief executive of the Stock Exchange, backed by the Bank of England and the Securities and Investments Board, the chief City watchdog, said random telephone surveillance would no longer be effective as a way of catching rule breakers if Article 5 is passed by the European Parliament. This law would state that no telephone conversation could be taped unless both parties to the conversation had consented.

Mr Casey said: "The taping of dealers' conversations is an

established and important contribution to investor protection. Any move to restrict this practice would undermine the monitoring of the markets and would run counter to the fundamental principle of strengthening City regulation."

The British Bankers' Association said: "Our members already support systems that encourage transparency in both terms of actual trades and the circumstances under which they are conducted. We believe these are strong controls which provide a good audit trail."

Final negotiations are being conducted through the European Council of Ministers and British concerns are being channelled through the Department of Trade and Industry.

Stigwood and Moran plan joint venture

By JASON NISSE



Stigwood: Hollywood links

ROBERT STIGWOOD, the producer of the *Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease* and *Evita* films, is joining forces with Christopher Moran, the controversial tycoon who was expelled from Lloyd's of London in 1982, to develop interests in the world of television, theatre and entertainment.

The two — who have been friends for 30 years — are currently working on plans to marry Mr Moran's £150 million fortune with Mr Stigwood's connections in Hollywood and the West End theatre. They hope the business will be a reprise of the Robert Stigwood Organisation, the company run by Mr Stigwood and backed by Mr Moran, which was sold to Polygram in the late 1970s.

Their venture, the stock market-listed Galaxy Media Corporation, will include a television production company run by Mike Mansfield, famous in the 1970s for *Supersonic*, his pop music show. He is currently producing children's shows, including *Tibs & Fibi*, *Funky Bunker* and *Bonkers*. Galaxy also manages a string of celebrities, including Shirley Bassey and Michael Parkinson, and owns the TV rights to *Billy Bunter*.

Mr Stigwood, 63, who launched the careers of Lord Lloyd-Webber, John Travolta and the Bee Gees, will become chairman of Galaxy, with Mr Moran as deputy chairman. "We are going to develop Galaxy as a broadly-based media

and rights-owning group, producing TV shows, films and events," Mr Moran said.

Mr Moran, 49, was one of the most flamboyant underwriters at Lloyd's before being banned in 1982. He is spending £150 million to renovate Crosby Hall in Chelsea, the 15th-century former home of Sir Thomas More and Richard III. As part of a deal with English Heritage to gain planning permission, the house will be opened to the public to display Mr Moran's art collection, which includes works by Van Dyck, Gainsborough and Reynolds. Mr Moran said that Crosby Hall would be placed in a charitable trust and left to the nation when he dies.

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Beckett sets out her stall on competitiveness to business leaders

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

IN THE hellish gloom of a blacked-out basement room at the Department of Trade and Industry's London headquarters, Margaret Beckett, in a shocking pink suit against a brilliantly lit pistachio stage set, came close to blinding the 100-odd business leaders listening to the President of the Board of Trade's vision

of Britain's new competitiveness. Latecomers had to feel their way in as Mrs Beckett moved to counter muted criticisms that in comparison with other departments, such as the Treasury and Foreign Office, the DTI had done little since Labour took office a month ago.

She threw off the carping with a salvo of policy announcements: reviews of almost everything, new White Papers, summits, task forces — the full panoply of

the Blair Government's armoury. Business loved it. From GrandMet to Guinness, GEC to Glaxo and Tesco to Toyota, she went down a treat. However, Mrs Beckett was taken to task for not mentioning the trade unions in her speech on competitiveness — not by the trade unions themselves, but by Ian Peters, deputy director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce.

Peter Job from Reuters warned against

being "inward-looking" over Europe. Neville Chamberlain from BNFL approved of her emphasis on the regions. Nicholas Goulding from the Forum of Private Business wanted early technical involvement in talks on Brussels initiatives. Roger Lyons, of the M5F, wanted details of what unions would be doing.

But even Mrs Beckett's closest advisers could barely believe it when Christopher Mackenzie, of GE Capital, came closest

to taking her to task — not for allowing trade unions back into Whitehall's corridors of power, but for not being fast enough off the mark in signing up to the social chapter. Mrs Beckett said they were going as fast as they could to do so. She was not arguing for widespread government intervention, or "itching" to take decisions which were properly for the private sector. "I am not trying to do your job," she said, to the evident relief of

her audience. But they stiffened up when she went on: "But I am determined not to neglect to do my own."

As the business leaders emerged, blinking into the light of the TV cameras, there was little but praise — and little, too, to differentiate between them. Amstrad's Alan Sugar and the TUC's John Monks were almost interchangeable. And with that Mrs Beckett and her new friends rushed off for urgent appointments.

Future of power pool in doubt

THE WAY electricity is traded may not survive in its current form into the next century after the industry regulator launched an attack on the mechanisms and speed of the electricity pool (Christine Buckley writes).

Publishing the annual report of the Office of Electricity Regulation, Professor Stephen Littlechild, threw into doubt the future of the pool, and its system of rewarding generators, in a series of criticisms. He said the system would continue in its present form until the millennium, albeit with short-term alterations, but after that the fundamental mechanism could be altered.

A shake-up would affect the way generators set prices and are paid for having power stations available.

The Labour Party was critical of the pool when in opposition.

Southern Electric plans to boost dividends despite windfall tax

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHERN ELECTRIC has risked angering the Government by promising fresh shareholder returns soon after it has paid the windfall tax.

Southern, the only independent regional electricity company, said its balance sheet was strong and that a return of value to shareholders was likely later in the year after it had got the windfall tax "out of the way". Its pledge of shareholder benefits comes just days after the company met Treasury officials to make its case on the windfall levy.

As one of the largest regional companies, Southern is likely to face a large hit from the tax. It refused to say what it had said to the Treasury but the fact that it followed a written submission with a meeting indicates it is mounting a concerted campaign. Ken Coates, chairman, said Southern had "made strong representations on fairness".



Jim Forbes, chief executive, and Ken Coates saw Southern's profits fall 10 per cent

Ian Marchant, finance director, said Southern had a strong balance sheet and would aim to give cash to shareholders later this year, probably at the time of the

company's interim results in November. He said: "We will return more value to shareholders, but not just yet."

The company has asked the regulator to allow it to claim

more from consumers to pay for its programme to deliver competition. Southern will miss the starting date for competition by several months, along with a number

of other companies who will not have their computer systems ready for trials in October ahead of the introduction of full competition next April. Southern's system will not be ready until January. It has asked for £43 million for the competition changes, a £2 million increase on its previous demand, in order to speed the process.

Southern is to put more money into generation projects, spending more than £100 million over the next three years. New stations will provide about 6 per cent of its electricity needs, while a long-term deal with British Energy, the nuclear generator, provides 40 per cent.

Pre-tax profits for the year to March 31 fell 10 per cent to £255 million as the newest distribution price review took effect. The final dividend of 15.0p, payable on October 7, takes the total to 21.5p. This compares, on a restated basis to account for a share split, with 18.75p for the previous year.

Deal signed as British Energy shows profit

By OLIVER AUGUST

BRITISH ENERGY, the nuclear power plant operator, has made its first profit and signed a £1.5 billion contract with British Nuclear Fuels.

Pre-tax profits for the year to March 31 reached £61 million, compared with the previous year's losses of £155 million. This was the result of improved output and cost cutting.

Output grew 10 per cent as the load factor grew from 72 to 79 per cent. At Sizewell B, the newest station, the load factor reached 85 per cent overall and 97 per cent, excluding mandatory switch-off periods. Last year was the first full financial year the station has been switched on.

Costs were brought down by 2 per cent but as previously announced 940 staff out of 5,940 are to be laid off between now and the year 2000, as part of the company's cost-cutting drive.

Earnings per share of 5.1p recovered from the previous year's loss of 22.1p a share. The dividend is 13.7p, in line with the flotation prospectus. The final dividend of 9.1p will be paid on July 28.

The new contracts for nuclear fuel will run for six years from 2000. They include the reprocessing of nuclear fuels. The deal reduces already agreed payments that have to be made after 2005.

It will also result in a £10 million improvement in the current financial year because financial exposure margins can be shifted down now. Robert Hawley, chief executive, said: "This is a tangible result of our new working relationship with BNFL."

To celebrate its first profitable year, British Energy will award its staff up to 2,000 share options, at a price to be set in July and exercisable in three years. Every employee will get at least 1,000, plus another two hundred for every year of service up to five years.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Next in out-of-court settlement on designs

NEXT, the high street retailer, has agreed to pay royalties on goods bearing a disputed children's design as part of an out-of-court settlement with a small, privately owned furniture firm. The designs in question are of soldiers, policemen and firemen and appear on a range of children's wallpaper and bed linen sold by Next. The Emma Jefferson Partnership, which is run by a husband and wife team and based in Leicestershire, claimed in a writ issued last month that the designs are almost identical to a range of characters it had developed and used on children's height charts.

Under the settlement, the two sides have agreed terms for a licence, which will enable Next to continue selling the products until the end of this year's summer sale. Next will pay royalties, estimated at £18,000, on their past and future sales. It will also pay the legal costs incurred by the Emma Jefferson Partnership. The settlement does not amount to an admission of liability by Next.

Bristol & West hearing

A SPECIAL hearing to confirm that the takeover of the Bristol & West Building Society by Bank of Ireland can go ahead will take place on June 11. Just over one million Bristol & West customers will receive free handouts of either cash or shares as a result of the deal. The Building Societies Commission hearing to decide formally whether the takeover can go ahead will take place in Bristol. The Commission will almost certainly give the deal its official approval. The takeover is due to take effect on July 28.

Powerscreen ahead

STRONG performances across all divisions helped to boost annual pre-tax profits at Powerscreen International, the engineering company, to £42 million from £36.99 million in the year to March 31. The company, based in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, reported an 18 per cent increase in earnings to 36.1p a share. John Craig, chairman, said the results were particularly pleasing against a background of a sluggish European market. The company declared a final dividend of 7.4p, giving a 10.2p (9.2p) total, payable on September 4.

Bid boosts TLS shares

SHARES of TLS surged 29 per cent to 125p yesterday after the vehicle rental company said it had received a bid approach. The company, now valued at £60.5 million, has developed into a nationwide rental force over the past four years, with profits rising at an average of 70 per cent since 1993. It is expected to turn in pre-tax profits of £7.3 million (£5.81 million) for this year. David Beever, former managing director of SBC Warburg and now director of London and Continental Railways, joined the board in January.

US merger go-ahead

H F AHMANSON & CO has withdrawn its \$6.73 billion bid for Great Western Financial Corp, allowing Washington Mutual, of Seattle, to merge with the company to form America's largest savings and loans company. Ahmanson, which first launched its bid in February, said that it could not raise its offer without seriously diluting its own stock. Great Western had rejected the Ahmanson offer, although both companies are based in California, in favour of a rival bid from Washington Mutual worth \$6.74 billion.

Tradepoint raises cash

SHARES in Tradepoint closed unchanged at 75p yesterday, despite falling as low as 60p earlier in the day, after the AIM-listed investment exchange published details of a £75,000 interim funding deal. Tradepoint raised the money through a placing of 1.6 million new shares with existing investors after a hitch in long-term funding discussions last week. The placing was over-subscribed. It is now looking for at least £6 million more in long-term financing. The value of share deals needs to increase by a factor of nearly 15 for it to break even.

James Crean sells stake

JAMES CREAN has sold its 27.8 per cent stake in United Beverages Holdings to Guinness for £12.9 million. A further consideration, up to a maximum of £150,000, may become payable to Crean based on the results of UBH for the year to May 31 and the period from June 1 to completion. UBH is engaged in the wholesale distribution and manufacturing of soft drinks and other beverages. James Crean said the disposal of this non-core activity is a further step in the completion of its strategic objective of restructuring and simplifying the group.

Warner Estate steady

WARNER ESTATE, the property investor, suffered a slight fall in pre-tax profit, from £4.86 million to £4.82 million, in the six months to March 31, although net asset value rose from 249p to 259p a share. Total earnings for the half year fell from 7.57p to 7.41p. Dividends rose from 4.00p to 4.15p. Warner said that activity in the commercial property market has increased since the industry became more confident about growth prospects. The residential market for both investment and vacant properties is improving.

RJB seeks state's support on coal

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

RJB MINING, Britain's biggest coal producer, yesterday held up the prospect of developing the largest coal reserves for 20 years — but said that the move depended on the Government showing commitment to the fuel.

RJB has a licence to sink a mine in Nottinghamshire that would tap up to 450 million tonnes and create 500 jobs. But it is unlikely to go ahead with the £300 million project for about two years, by which time the market for coal in the UK will be clearer.

Then it will pull back from development if it does not

believe it will have buyers for the fuel. RJB is looking for reassurances from the Government that there will be substantial support for clean coal technology and that coal will be supported in a mixed fuel energy policy.

The mining company is involved in talks with the main generators for contracts to start running next year. These are the first negotiations to be conducted with the privatised electricity industry, which is free to take in cheap exports and to switch more of its power stations to gas.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.24	2.08
Austria Sch	20.70	19.15
Belgium Fr	60.95	62.21
Canada \$	2.356	2.180
Cyprus Cyp	0.878	0.859
Denmark Kr	11.24	10.42
Finland Mk	6.93	6.83
France Fr	9.30	9.18
Germany Dm	2.96	2.74
Greece Dr	471	434
Hong Kong \$	13.34	12.21
Iceland	127	107
Ireland Pt	1.14	1.05
Israel Sh	5.88	5.23
Italy Lira	2028	2725
Japan Yen	203.00	186.60
Korea \$	9.54	8.94
Netherlands Gld	3.61	3.054
New Zealand \$	2.51	2.29
Norway Kr	12.16	11.28
Portugal Esc	206.00	274.50
S Africa Rd	7.97	7.68
Spain Ptas	248.00	230.00
Sweden Kr	13.35	12.32
Switzerland Fr	2.49	2.308
Turkey Lira	24623	22267
USA \$	1.726	1.592

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Whose welfare should come first?



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Sir Peter Davis may prove to be the ideal choice to head the Government's Welfare to Work programme. He has an unusual spread of business experience, some original ideas and a fair amount of leverage among the company chiefs who will have to be prevailed upon to support the scheme if it is to have any chance of success.

Unfortunately, Sir Peter has a bit of an image problem. The man who took the rash decision to appear on television in the guise of a guardian angel actually stands accused of heading an organisation that continues to sell people products they do not need. This, of course, would have been perfectly acceptable if Sir Peter were still at Sainsbury's, where he once earned a living helping to promote expensive, grating carrots and other non-essentials. It is not considered acceptable when the products are financial services.

As the scandal over the mis-selling of personal pensions has raged on, the line from the Pru has been that the chief executive could not be held responsible for the company's failure on that score. The career of the pugilistic Mick Newmarch was burned on that pyre.

But Sir Peter can no longer be allowed exemption from blame. He has been in charge while the Pru has been guilty of failing to deal with righting the wrongs of mis-selling. The company was high up the list of offenders as far

as Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary, was concerned as she told the industry to move speedily to compensate victims.

And now it seems that the mis-selling has not ceased. Its regulator, the Savings & Investments Board, is far from happy with the way that the country's biggest insurance and pensions company is drumming up business. So upset was SIB, on seeing how products it deemed unsuitable were being sold to clients, that it has demanded the entire direct sales force of the Pru be tested again to establish whether individuals are qualified to take money from a naive public.

Retraining and retesting will prove awkward and expensive for the Pru. The news that it is necessary could be even more damaging for the company. For perhaps the SIB is being charitable in suggesting that what was needed was better training. It is just possible that at least some of the sales force were perfectly well trained, but still had difficulty in coming to terms with telling a potential client that he would be better off putting his money in National Savings than with the Pru. After all, a nagging voice in the salesman's pocket may have whispered: "National

Savings do not pay my commission." Until Sir Peter and his board have brought their sales force under control, perhaps they should concentrate on looking after the welfare of savers and let others run the Welfare to Work scheme. The Pru might even be able to provide work for some of the unemployed that the Government wants to help. In the short term, they could help to fill out cheques for all those who are still waiting for their compensation.

Davies sounds an early warning

HOWARD DAVIES has sounded a timely warning to City dealers in some of the more exotic derivative instruments.

There is already mounting concern among those responsible for the standing of London as the foremost global financial centre that traders have for some time

worked on the assumption that European currency convergence of some sort would take place in January 1999 and they have placed their bets (or, sorry, executed their hedging strategies) already.

If EMU does not now take place or evolves in a different form, softer in every sense, then banks and their security arms could face massive losses. Add to that volatile mixture the fact that many "stress" testing programmes used by banks are not robust enough and you can understand Mr Davies' concerns.

What is clearly needed now, and what the Deputy Governor had in mind, is a concerted effort by all concerned to work together to ensure some sort of uniform risk assessment models. Ruckus risk is all very well but what the Bank, and subsequently Super-SIB need is a practical and sensible early warning system on a potential crisis. What might

seem like a little local difficulty in one bank's trading book could easily enough lead to a systemic failure. That would do London no good.

Without being too alarmist, Mr Davies seems to be echoing what the impressively energetic Helen Liddell will be outlining today. That is that City regulation, and that most certainly means risk control, will only be more effective if all parties concerned work together. This can be achieved by the industry seconding staff to various watchdog bodies such as the Bank's own nine-strong Traded Market Team.

Both sides are on a sharp learning curve but if all concerned are working on the same lines there is less likelihood of potential loss-making positions remaining hidden until it is too late.

A second monitoring tool could be to merge the Bank's Special Investigations Unit and the SIB's

equivalent into a high powered task force patrolling the market with powers to spot check any rumour or market concerns at an early stage.

In the event of a disaster this SAS of the financial markets could also be mobilised as a rapid response unit to limit any subsequent damage or market fall-out.

Out-of-town plans out of the window

The car is accelerating towards acquiring the same level of social unacceptability as tobacco, but the speed may not be fast enough to satisfy the Government.

This week it has tried persuasion as the route to encouraging people to leave the car behind, but there is a growing suspicion that it will soon reach for the stick. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is thought likely to raise petrol tax in his Budget next month, but another measure which might also appeal to an environmentally conscious administration is to call a halt to out-of-town development.

The rush to escape the confines of built-up areas has seen retail-

ers rushing out of town, where they can spread their wares and their car parks. More recently, they have been followed by the leisure operators, putting multiplex cinemas, sports centres and the like on sites with plenty of free parking.

In his reign at the Environment Department, John Gummer had already begun to clamp down on such schemes. Now his successors are likely to take an even tougher line, arguing the need to protect town centres from dereliction while also diminishing dependence on the car.

The ramifications of such a tightening of policy could be far-reaching. Companies such as Virgin, Rank and Warner, for instance, may have to review the charms of the single screen cinema. But a new clampdown can only enhance the value of those out of town palaces that already exist.

Merger mystery

MRS BECKETT'S address to an invited audience yesterday made clear that she is keen on competition. Quite what this may mean in practice remains a mystery. While corporate financiers were delighted to learn that mergers may not have to be justified as positively in the public interest, most want to see what fate befalls a few bids before they celebrate. The decision on Bass's takeover of Carlsberg Tescy will be more enlightening than Mrs B's speech.

NFC sales mark 'final' revamp at cost of £49m

By PAUL DURMAN

NFC, the transport and logistics company, is reorganising its businesses once again, this time at a cost of £49 million.

Gerry Murphy, chief executive, said the latest charges stem from the £207 million of disposals NFC announced yesterday. These include the sale of the Lynx parcel business to a management buyout for £26 million, and the sale of the BRS car leasing operation to GE Capital for £120 million.

Mr Murphy said NFC had "perfectly decent" results and was acting from a position of strength. He said: "We want to focus on fewer businesses, with quite serious financial firepower to invest in those businesses."

He said the latest reorganisation provisions would be the last. One analyst commented: "The trouble is, NFC has been reorganising as long as I can remember. More cynical investors may think that perhaps it's not [the final provision]."

Other changes include the departure of Graham Roberts, who was chief executive of the loss-making continental Euro-

pean business. Paid £170,000 last year, he had been with the group for 26 years since joining as a graduate trainee.

Besides trying to cut the European losses, which rose by £800,000 to £5.3 million in the six months to the end of March, NFC is also reorganising BRS's truck rental, contract hire and engineering activities.

It has closed the Next Day Pallet network that was part of Exel Logistics, and plans to cut

Tempus, 30

the number of sites from which it operates in the UK.

NFC said its underlying pre-tax profits for the half-year rose 13 per cent to £50.1 million, and it also made a £3.2 million profit on property sales. The £49 million cost of the reorganisation and the £20 million profit on the disposals will be taken in the second half.

The buyout of Lynx, under discussion for several months, is backed by NatWest Ven-

tures, which is investing £9.9 million in the £100 million business.

The parcel firm's management team, headed by Philip Rose, have invested £1.8 million. Lynx, now returned to profitability, employs 3,000 people.

BRS Car Lease, originally formed to manage NFC's car fleets, made a £10 million profit on sales of £49 million last year. Last September it had net assets of £87 million.

NFC has also sold the remaining US and Canadian activities of Pickfords, the removal firm.

The group's operating profits from the UK and Ireland increased 12 per cent to £39.1 million, aided by a good performance from Pickfords, which was itself helped by the strengthening housing market.

Exel Logistics has surrendered its contracts with Whitbread, Homebase and Boots because they were only marginally profitable.

NFC will pay an unchanged interim dividend of 2.5p a share on August 11.



Sitting pretty: Colin Pilgrim, left, chief executive, with Paul Clarke, finance director of Heal's, where turnover rose

Heal's branching out of London

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

HEAL'S, the furniture retailer that floated on the London Stock Exchange in March, is planning a new store in Glasgow or Manchester in the next few months.

The retailer aims to expand its three stores, which are all in the London area, to up to ten by opening one or two

new branches every year.

Colin Pilgrim, chief executive, said that the company was looking to open stores of up to 25,000 sq ft in other large cities, including Dublin, Newcastle upon Tyne and Leeds. It is also looking to open stores of 12,000 to 15,000 sq ft in smaller towns and cities such as Bristol, Bath, Oxford and Cambridge.

The company expects to finish the refurbishment of its Tottenham Court Road store, and to refurbish its Guildford store, in the next two years, at a cost of about £2 million.

The cost of flotation, at £800,000, meant a fall in profits at the interim stage. Heal's reported yesterday. In the six months to March 29, pre-tax profit was £376,000

compared to £1.22 million a year ago. Underlying profits grew 37 per cent, however, on turnover that rose by 22 per cent, to £13.2 million. Like-for-like sales growth was 18 per cent. Mr Pilgrim said that trading had remained buoyant into the second half.

The company will not pay any dividend until the end of its financial year.

Thomson to be sold for £80m

By ERIC REGULY

A MANAGEMENT team backed by 34, the venture capital firm, agreed yesterday to buy Thomson Directories, the main competitor to BT's Yellow Pages, for £80 million.

The price is lower than expected. US West International, the overseas arm of America's US West Media Group, bought Thomson from Dun & Bradstreet for about £90 million in 1994. Thomson publishes 164 local directories in the UK.

The buyout team was led by Gary List, 45, a former Burger King executive who has been Thomson's chief executive for three years. Six other senior Thomson managers joined him. Mr List said the group will expand the business and develop new media formats for its content. Thomson recently launched CD-Rom and Internet services.

US West said it will spend the £80 million on its wireless telephony and cable businesses. In the UK, it owns half of One-2-One, the mobile phone company, and is a significant investor in TeleWest, the second-largest cable company.

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BT chief to double pay if MCI won

By ERIC REGULY

SIR PETER BONFIELD, the chief executive of British Telecom, is to be paid a bonus of £500,000, equivalent to his annual salary, if the company completes its £13 billion takeover of MCI, America's second largest long distance phone company.

BT's annual report, released yesterday, said the bonus would be paid over two years and will "take into account his contribution to the closing and effective implementation of the merger."

Sir Peter is to become chief executive of the merged company, to be called Concert. The merger, recently approved by the competition authorities in Brussels, awaits US approvals, which are expected in the autumn. Sir Peter will also become eligible for a variety of Concert bonus and share option plans. The value of the plans, however, will not be disclosed until next year.

Sir Peter's base salary in the year to the end of March, his first full year of employment at BT, was £498,800. A bonus of £225,000 and benefits took is total pay to £723,800. He and Sir Iain Vallance, chairman, are eligible for performance-related bonuses limited to 50 per cent of their salaries. Sir Iain earned £698,900 in salary and bonus, up from £657,500 previously.

Michael Hepher, managing director who left BT in January 1996, is still on the payroll and earned £510,000 in the last financial year. BT decided to continue paying him because he did not resign and was not fired. Mr Hepher, now chief executive of Charterhouse, is to be paid until his contract runs out in August.

Beckett in signal of approval

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

MARGARET BECKETT yesterday gave the go-ahead to National Express to take over North London Railways, the fifth rail franchise awarded to the bus and train travel group.

The President of the Board of Trade said there was no need to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the merger of National Express with the company that runs services from London to Northampton and in North and west London.

The decision comes two weeks after Mrs Beckett referred the National Express takeover of two other companies amid claims that its national coach service raised competition concerns.

Rivals criticised the award of the ScotRail franchise in Scotland and Central Trains in the West Midlands, saying passengers on some routes would be deprived of choice. National Express won arguably the most lucrative franchise, the subsidy-free Gatwick Express, and has also taken over Midland Main Line.

Mrs Beckett also said yesterday that she would not refer Great Western's acquisition of North West Railways to the MMC. In ruling on a referral in the case of the ScotRail and Central rail routes, Mrs Beckett overruled Office of Fair Trading advice, prompting suggestions that the new Government was taking a tougher line on rail franchises. But she underlined agreement with officials on the latest cases by saying "I agreed with the Director-General of Fair Trading that there were no competition or other concerns which warranted reference."

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Cable TV players signal time for action

Eric Reguly examines two vital decisions that the industry must take as digital promises viewers an explosion of choice

The struggling cable-TV companies have two crucial decisions to make in the next few months. They have to decide whether they want to be content providers and packagers as well as distributors, and whether they want BSKyB to remain as their main source of programming.

The cable companies — led by Cable and Wireless Communications, the four-way merger of Mercury Communications and TeleWest, the number two player — are under extreme pressure to devise a winning long-term strategy in a hurry because of the imminent arrival of competing methods of television delivery.

This month, the Independent Television Commission is to decide the outcome of the race for the digital terrestrial TV licences. The winner will gain the right to broadcast dozens of digital channels, greatly expanding viewing choice for the three quarters of the population

who have bought neither cable nor satellite TV services. Meanwhile, BSKyB, the satellite broadcaster 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, is pushing ahead with plans to launch some 200 digital channels and interactive services by next spring. The explosion of choice threatens to leave the cable companies in third place in a market that may have enough room for only two main delivery systems.

The cable industry is a mess. The shares of each of the publicly listed players are trading below their flotation prices; TeleWest shares sank to a third of the issue price last week. Debt is enormous because of the billions spent gouging trenches into the urban landscape, and profits are nowhere in sight. Only about one in five homes passed by

cable takes the service. Furthermore, they are not seen as masters of their own destiny. BSKyB dominates their programming schedule to the extent that the typical viewer closely identifies cable with BSKyB. There is no cable-TV "brand" and little popular programming that does not come from BSKyB.

The cable companies, of course, were generally happy with this arrangement in the early years. Without BSKyB's offerings, notably the premium sport and movie channels, they might have no TV customers at all and they cannot

justify their existence as telephone-only businesses. They have since come to the conclusion that their relationship with BSKyB is not ideal, partly because it costs them more money than it used to.

Alan Lyons, an analyst at Hoare Govett, said the gross programming margins earned by the cable companies have declined from 55 per cent in 1995 to 40 per cent. It is the view of some analysts that the cable companies have two ways to rectify the situation. They can either develop a closer arrangement with BSKyB, in which they would continue buying the bulk of

their programming from BSKyB in exchange for less costly terms, or do the opposite. This would mean developing their own content or buying it from another source. Two main sources of content would increase viewer choice, potentially boosting cable-TV penetration rates, and giving BSKyB some incentive to drop its prices.

It seems highly unlikely that the cable companies will opt for developing their own content. Mr Lyons said: "The cable companies just want to do is what they know best, which is operating cable-TV and

telephony networks." If so, they would have to buy the services from someone else. Enter the Mirror Group, owner of the *Daily Mirror* newspaper and the Live TV cable channels, and Flextech, the second-largest provider of cable and satellite programming, after BSKyB. The Mirror and Flextech know each other well. They each own 20 per cent of Scottish Media, the ITV and newspaper group, and David Montgomery and Roger Luard, their respective chief executives, are friends.

The Mirror has proposed launching a vehicle known internally as the Programme Company, which would supply and package channels for the cable companies. Details are scanty, but it seems that the family of subscription channels that are to be launched by the new

Flextech-BBC joint venture would be on offer if Flextech could be convinced to back the Mirror. Rights to other channels and services would be purchased and a TV brand clearly identified with the cable companies would be developed. The Mirror newspaper, for its part, would be used to cross-promote the channels and provide capital.

Programme Co wants Cable and Wireless Communications and TeleWest to become shareholders. Without their support as equity partners as well as buyers, it is unlikely that Programme Co will get off the ground. CWC has been approached and is thought to be taking the proposal seriously.

There is no guarantee that the Mirror proposal will become the deal that reverses the industry's flagging fortunes. What seems certain, however, is that one way or another, a sea change is in store for the way cable companies do business.

Motoring showdown heads for the high-technology showroom

Kevin Eason
on a revolution that will hasten the demise of the shifty forecourt shark

Arthur Daley would have thought a greenhouse gas was the hot air rising from the compost heap. For Britain's favourite car salesman yesterday, the launch of a high-profile Government campaign to get more commuters out of cars, must have been an uncomfortable meeting of cosy past and uncertain future.

Showrooms full of gleaming machinery designed entirely to entice buyers to burn carbon fuels and fill up their ten feet of road space were the target of ministers telling drivers to leave their cars at home during the month-long "Don't Choke Britain" campaign.

Britain is awash with cars and not even a salesman of Arthur Daley's genius would be able to shift them. The next generation of salesmen might though, as the days of the hand-wringing, shifty forecourt shark are almost over. Instead, the showroom will become the high-technology battleground that will determine which carmakers make it through the millennium. The frontline staff who confront the customer and cut the costs that could keep a carmaker in business will be the salesmen of the future, the man on the assembly line.

A century after Daimler cars spluttered out of Britain's first factory in Coventry, the motor industry faces a revolution, spurred by overcapacity and the demands of increasingly environmentally conscious governments bound to demand curbs on car use.

The industry has blown apart government predictions of an increase in car ownership that would be terrifying by any standards — from 25 million now to 40 million cars in use by 2020, a growth rate that could make today's bumper-to-bumper jams seem a minor interlude.

But the truth is likely to be much different. The signs are that car sales are levelling out



Daley dose: the type of car salesmanship represented by the actor George Cole is facing a marketing shakeup

throughout Western Europe as markets like Britain reach maturity, while the demands for reduced congestion will see many consumers swapping the car for a bus, train or cycle.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders says that the ownership figure for 2020 is more likely to be 30 million, depending on demographics and how many cars are scrapped annually. So carmakers will have to accept annual sales of new cars at around 2 million for the foreseeable future, at a time when there are too many manufacturers making too many models — 4 million too many cars annually in Europe alone. As a result competition will be fiercer than at almost any time in the industry's history as carmakers become increasingly desperate to keep costly assembly lines running at a capacity high enough to generate some profit.

There are more cars to choose from and more badges. A decade ago Ford took up to 30 per cent of the British new car market, relying on its

mainstream Escort and Fiesta; now it is struggling to hold on to 19 per cent in the face of European and Japanese competition, as well as Far Eastern marques such as Daewoo and Hyundai from South Korea, and Proton of Malaysia.

Nobody buys a car any more either: they buy a "life-style", so manufacturers make a range of models from one chassis, such as the Ford Puma being launched soon — sports coupe on top but Fiesta underneath. The marketing is slick and there is little more carmakers can do to improve factory efficiency, particularly in Britain where they have been among the quickest to adapt and utilise the just-in-time delivery and team-working techniques pioneered by the Japanese. Costs are down to the bone, factories are working longer and quicker and the quality of cars is higher.

The contrast with dealerships, which often seem to be geared to the needs of a Neanderthal man, could not be greater. But the good old days

of piling them high and selling them cheap, with salesmen haggling over price simply to keep the metal moving, are doomed. The showroom revolution might have started slowly but will gather pace in the next three years at a rate that will shock dozens of dealers out of business.

The Retail Motor Industry Federation calculates that today's 7,400 franchised dealerships will be no more than 5,500 by 2000, and will probably be concentrated in fewer hands as the top ten dealer companies — already among the world's largest retailers — exert their influence over the way we buy cars.

Chris Macgowan, the federation's chief executive, says: "It is finally registering with the manufacturers that the dealer is not the last link in the chain; it is at the centre of the hub and vital to their future. We have reached a stage where the prospect of continuous growth in annual car sales and ownership is no more; we

are replacing cars, not adding constantly to the numbers," he said. "To stay in the market, carmakers and dealers will have to have products to sell at the right price and be able to distribute their cars properly, cheaply and efficiently."

While manufacturers spent a decade striving to make cars efficiently they forgot the mechanics of getting their product from factory to showroom. Dealers would hold vast and expensive stocks on vast and expensive lots of land in an assortment of specifications or colours. If the customer in Exeter wanted red when there was only blue in stock, the dealer had to trawl the network and have it shipped south.

Malcolm Harbour, director of the International Car Distribution Programme, estimates that the total cost of such inefficiency could be as much as £431-a-car — around 5 per cent of the retail price of a family hatchback. As dealers become more efficient, they must also change their image: out with

Arthur Daley and in with entertainment and a marque that can provide products throughout a lifetime.

Consumers educated by Disney theme parks, where every dream you want is yours, or Virgin, where the customer is not only king but treated as a friend of the boss, increasingly refuse to be fobbed off by salesmen with an eye on the month-end bonus. The traditional image of the dealer whose welcome amounts to a plastic cup of machine tea and a year-old copy of *Autocar*, will give way to automotive theme parks: central hub showrooms that exhibit each model and feature computers where you can drive the latest model on a simulator, and provide a playground for the children. The cars on display will reflect the lifestyles of the customer, guiding them through each age from budget starter model through company runabout, thirtysomething family people-carrier to grey power convertibles.

The salesmen — and women — will be salaried and not on bonuses that can distort their need to offload a car onto a customer who doesn't really want it. Meanwhile, servicing will be at satellite dealerships located in suburbs near to customers' homes, which might have access to an Internet Web site with prices and specifications and a computerised link to the hub, but no cars in stock.

Daewoo, the South Korean manufacturer, pioneered the concept in this country but has not gone as far yet as many analysts predict that many carmakers must stay in existence. Streamlining distribution and concentrating on megastores will cut costs, which could be reflected in lower prices, stimulating sales for manufacturers that get the combination right.

"European mass-market car retailing has been fundamentally unprofessional," Daniela Becher, senior partner at Fitch, the international design company, says. "The industry failed to perceive that consumer expectations have increased dramatically with companies such as First Direct, Virgin and Nike breaking traditional retail barriers. It is time car dealerships tapped into the resources at their fingertips. They must act fast and radically if they are to satisfy the sharpened appetites of the highly-aware consumer."

BUSINESS LETTERS

Governor's supervision called into question after three bank disasters

From the chairman, Barings 94 per cent Perpetual Shareholders Action Group Sir, It is very comforting to read that Lord Alexander appears to have expressed the view that Mr George "has been an excellent Governor". He can, of course, speak of Mr George's prowess as a banker talking about another banker; but this week's changes have dealt with the issue of Mr George's capacity as a regulator/supervisor.

I am sure that Lord Alexander would not have been so foolish as to have been a depositor with BCCI or have had any involvement with Johnson Mathew or with Barings and thus his involvement with those three disasters of banking supervision may not have come into focus as they have, for example, for my constituents, the 1994 Perpetual Bondholders.

The truth of the matter is that, had Mr George and his team done what they arguably ought to have done, which is to have enforced the large exposure directive, the Barings

collapse might never have happened. In a sense what is even more disappointing about Mr George's ability to supervise is the way he set up his internal inquiry.

Lord Alexander will be the first to know that for such an inquiry to have any weight it must be independent, and the Bank of England's inquiry was far from independent given the make-up of the Board of Inquiry.

What the City requires is a supervisory body that has bite and accepts responsibility; not what Mr George presided over, namely a toothless organisation which ducked behind some form of "Crown privilege".

Why should a para-statal organisation charged with specific obligations on behalf of the investing public not compensate the investing public when it falls down on those obligations?

Yours faithfully,
J. M. L. STONE,
c/o S. J. Bervin & Co.,
222 Grays Inn Road,
WCI.

Tiddlers in a big pond should not be ignored

From the Head of Corporate Affairs, Bristol Water Plc Sir, In all the plethora of coverage over who is going to be should be/refuses to be affected by the windfall tax on privatised utilities, I see little or no reference to the position of the water-only companies such as Bristol. Yes, we are utilities; yes, we are monopolies. But we were not privatised. Bristol, for example, has just celebrated its 150th year of service to the community as a private company. When the water authorities were privatised, we did not have our debts written off and we did not get green dowers.

We have had to meet the same economic, customer service, quality and environmen-

tal regulation regimes as the water and sewerage companies, but starting from a much weaker financial base. We have certainly not made excessive profits against those planned and we have a good track record on everything from resources management through to leakage levels.

Surely, if anybody has a good case for being exempted from the windfall tax, it's us. This "tiddler" of the industry supplies over a million people. We just hope that Labour does recognise that all water companies are not the same.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY WILLIAMS,
Head of Corporate Affairs,
Bristol Water Plc,
PO Box 218,
Bridgwater Road, Bristol.

Raised voices

The battle to find a successor to Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, by next spring has occasioned some heated scenes within the bank's Baker Street boardroom. There are three internal candidates. In the lead is the institutions' favourite, Ian Harley, 46, finance director and 25 years an Abbey man. Coming up on the rails is Andrew Pople, 38, in charge of retail banking, who may have to wait until next time around. Third is Tim Ingram, 49, managing director of the European arm. Tensions have become frayed, and even



"I call it Pru because I keep having to take it back for retesting"

on occasion lost, I fear, over the preliminary merger talks with NatWest and the failed bid for Scottish Amicable. Birch wants to bow out on a high note. My boardroom mole tells me that not all Abbey directors are as keen for a NatWest link — some opposed it even if this prevented them from currying favour with Birch to be his chosen successor. Perhaps the Abbey should instead resume merger talks with the Pru.

● GAVIN STRANG, our new transport secretary, addressing a joint conference held by the pressure groups London First and Transport 2000: "The only true test for the Department of Transport is, what progress are we making on the ground?"

Crash time

WHEN, several weeks ago, I revealed the identity of Tony Blair's hairdresser, the poor man's salon was promptly besieged by tabloid reporters. Here's another tip, boys. An industrial tribunal hearing in Croydon Monday brought by one Caroline Olds. Her former employer, Computacenter — yes, I fear that is how they spell it — provided, among other things, the dealing systems at NatWest Markets, BZW and SBC Warburg. Olds claims to be a former



super-saleswoman earning £250,000 at her best who has been dumped after nine years with the company. She also alleges sexual discrimination. The company is denying this. "We've gone out of our way to be co-operative, and it's very unfortunate it's come to this," said a spokesman. The point is that on Monday there may, or there may not, be some rather hairy allegations made about Olds' relationship with a senior colleague. We shall see.

Options trade

HOWARD DAVIES was in sardonic mood when he addressed the opening of the conference on international derivatives at the Inter-Continental Hotel on the subject of the single cur-

rency. The best outcome for the futures and options markets might be for EMU to go ahead, given the huge amount of business this would drum up for dealers, he accepted. But he added: "It is a moot point as to whether the impact on the profits and bonuses of derivatives traders will be the number one criterion in the minds of Labour MPs when they come to reach a view on EMU — but I will certainly draw it to their attention if you would like me to."

Archie's choice

ARCHIE NORMAN, chairman of Asda and fledgling MP, will today or tomorrow decide which of the Tory party leadership candidates he will support. Rumour has him edging towards William Hague, a fellow graduate of McKinsey, the management consultants. Norman has been strangely silent since the election, but he breaks his silence to admit this — "at the moment the stress is on the word considering. The sensible thing for people in my position is to see all the candidates and form a view". There is one more contender for Norman's support, but he is not saying who.

But what of rumours that the man who turned around Asda might be up for the party chairmanship, and the rather more difficult job of revitalising the Conservative brand name, if Hague wins the election? "One of the things you discover about the leadership election is that because there are six candidates, all sorts of

people get suggested for one position or another," he says, which I take to mean that all sorts of promises are being made in smoke-filled rooms. "I'm completely new to the House of Commons — I might not have the experience. Too modest, too modest."

● The Hodson presence lingers at Ronson. Howard Hodson may have gone from the lighter firm, but his son Howard Hodson Jr remains. They could hardly fire him, because his face features in a new advertising campaign for watches, as you can see, with the slogan "It's tough on the streets." How true. Just ask Daddy.

MARTIN WALLER



Ronson's advertising campaign for watches keeps it in the family

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Anti-fraction faction wins US decimal point

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN NEW YORK

FRACTIONS edged closer to extinction on Wall Street yesterday after the Nasdaq stock market said it would publish a "position paper" on decimal pricing of stocks by September 1.

Under intense pressure to follow suit, officials at the New York Stock Exchange, America's oldest, conceded that they would have to make a preliminary proposal on pricing reform this week.

Nasdaq's pragmatic moves (and the NYSE's resolute ones) follow the recent approval, by a senators' sub-committee, of legislation that

would force Wall Street to change its system of stock prices from one based on eighths of a dollar to the tidier decimal system.

The eccentric American method is unchanged from 1752, when the NYSE was founded and the Spanish gold dollar was the most trusted currency in the colonies. Change, then, was made by physically breaking the deeply scored coins into eight equal pieces.

So entrenched is the system that when the Nasdaq market was launched in 1971, it, too, embraced the hoary system of fractions. No other country shares the system. But experts believe that it costs investors billions of dollars

in stock purchase prices that might otherwise be lower. The size of a "tick" — or minimum price movement — on the NYSE is 12.5 cents. Increments of one eighth favour buyers much less than increments of a tenth would.

Senator Michael Oxley, a co-sponsor of the Bill on decimal pricing currently before the House of Representatives' Commerce Committee, said the fractions system was "anti-consumer". He said: "Decimals are also easier. They make perfect sense."

Proponents of decimals say they are necessary for three reasons: everyone else has them; small buyers would understand the market

better; and the "spread" between buying and selling prices for stocks would narrow. This last point lies at the centre of the NYSE's opposition to change: the larger the spread, the higher the traders' commission.

Yet with all US exchanges bar the NYSE now accepting that the eighth is a fraction too large for fair trade — Nasdaq, this week, became the latest to permit the one-sixteenth tick — the gentle push for the decimal has become a powerful shove. In a letter to Senator Oxley, even the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission conceded that the demise of the fraction was "inevitable".

Minister to tighten up on rogue directors

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE Government will today announce a sharp rise in the number of directors to face disqualification — and unveil tough new rules aimed at protecting consumers when companies go bust.

Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs Minister, is expected to threaten punitive sanctions for rogue operators as part of a wider drive to clean up trading standards. Mr Griffiths has promised a "revolution" for British consumers, saying their interests have been neglected by previous governments.

The number of directors banned or disqualified increased nearly 50 per cent last year, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Some 946 directors were deemed unfit to hold office, up from 633 in 1995. Actions were started against 1,376 directors, up 20 per cent on the previous year.

The rise in disqualifications is partly because of new reporting standards introduced last September, which make it easier for insolvency practitioners to identify and

report misconduct. Ministers are keen to promote a healthy business climate in which enterprise can flourish.

Today's pronouncements are intended to underline the Government's commitment to protecting the consumer. Mr Griffiths is expected to single out so-called "phoenix directors" who continually reinvent themselves with new enterprises, leaving a trail of disadvantaged creditors and consumers in their wake. A relatively small percentage of rogue directors is to blame.

Examples include unbonded travel agents who go out of business, stranding passengers, and throwing holiday plans into disarray. As unsecured creditors, consumers rank well below the banks and suppliers in terms of distributions. Mr Griffiths will reaffirm the Government's tough new stance on rogue directors and pledge to put questionable practices under increased scrutiny.

Mr Griffiths has kept up a fast-paced programme since taking office. He has cautioned against lenders who prey on people with poor credit records, and pledged early action on a raft of fronts. He has been particularly critical of electrical retailers, who have been put on watch by the Office of Fair Trading over high-priced extended warranties.

Mr Griffiths has pledged to take "whatever steps are necessary" in ensuring that people taking out bank loans and mortgages have all the available information at their disposal.

He said: "The system now is far too weighted in the banks and building societies' favour, and consumers find themselves at a disadvantage."



Griffiths: tough stance



David Green is ready to take his seat at the helm of Larsen, his company's new purchase

Colefax and Fowler buys US company

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

COLEFAX and Fowler, the wallpaper and furnishing fabrics group, is to pay £4.03 million cash for Jack Lenor Larsen, the US fabrics company.

The acquisition is being funded by a conditional placing, carried out yesterday, of 1.27 million new ordinary shares in Colefax and Fowler at 105p, raising £1.34 million.

Rationalising the Larsen business will result in an exceptional charge of some £1.25 million in the current financial year. The acquisition will take Colefax and Fowler's gearing to 40 per cent. Colefax and Fowler said that the sales increase it experienced in the first half continued in the second half of the year.

The American company is named after its 70-year-old founder and owner, Mr Larsen, a fabrics designer, will remain as a consultant for at least three years after the change of ownership. The company specialises in innovative woven textiles and currently does not sell outside the US.

David Green, chairman and chief executive of Colefax and Fowler, emphasised that there was little overlap in designs. He said he will introduce the Larsen brand to British and continental European markets. Larsen had turnover of £3.3 million in the six months to the end of last year, and pre-tax profits of £200,000.

Fall in material costs boosts Allied Colloids

BY FRASER NELSON

A RETURN to a more stable chemicals market helped Allied Colloids to stage a firm recovery last year as it overcame the strength of the pound to turn in record year-end results.

The pollution controls, minerals and paper company credited the fall of global raw material prices for its recovery from last year's slump as it returned pre-tax profits 30 per cent ahead at £54.6 million.

CPS, the American polymers producer that it bought for £234 million in January, generated profits of £5.1 million before tax, although inter-

est on the debt taken to make the deal cost £1.2 million. Chemical prices, which surged 25 per cent two years ago, eased 12 per cent last year, allowing the company's gross margin to be restored to 40.8 per cent by March, against an average 36.2 per cent the previous year. Earnings grew to 6.76p a share, from 5.57p last time, with a 10 per cent dividend rise to 3.15p. A final 2.51p is due on August 22.

Tighter environmental legislation in Europe and the US helped its pollution control division to generate a 15.7 per cent increase in sales.

Its paper division saw a 12.4 per cent jump in business as printers returned to the market after running out of stock, built up to avoid the surge in pulp prices two years ago.

Although overseas markets spoke for 89 per cent of group sales, the company profited from hedging orders and using the gain to pay £19 million less for the \$390 million acquisition of CPS in November.

David Farrar, chief executive, cautioned that currency fluctuations will shave about £6.5 million from the results next time, but this would be offset by profits from CPS.



Farrar: currency warning

Atlas board backs £86m takeover bid by Finns

BY OLIVER AUGUST

THE board of Atlas Converting, the machine manufacturer, has recommended an £86 million takeover bid, which was yesterday announced by Valmet, the Finnish paper machine maker. The offer values the shares at 81.5p, a premium of 26 per cent on Tuesday's closing price.

Chris Rogers, the Atlas chairman, said the merger with Valmet would strengthen its international base. Matti Sundberg, the Valmet chief executive, said: "This acquisition brings together a global leader in paper ma-

chines, process automation and related services for the pulp and paper industry with Atlas."

Valmet has received irrevocable undertakings from the directors of Atlas to accept the offer, representing a total of 26 per cent of the share capital.

The acquisition is seen as a move to increase market share aggressively ahead of expected price increases.

Valmet said: "Prices of pulp and various paper grades remained at the low level to which they fell during the first half of 1996."

The company added: "It is

generally expected that prices will begin to rise at the latest by the latter half of this year."

"The acquisition will enable Valmet to market a full range of products to the flexible packaging industry worldwide. This acquisition is in line with our strategy to grow our core businesses and promises to be very fruitful for both companies."

Atlas is based in Bedford and Heywood, Greater Manchester, and employs 500 people. Its main interest is in the manufacture of winders and vacuum metalisers and sheeting equipment.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Troubled Readicut blames sterling

READICUT International is to cut its dividend for the first time in seven years, claiming that the soaring pound has blunted its ability to compete in every one of its markets at home and abroad. Cheap foreign imports were weakening its core UK market. It said, leading to pre-tax profits of £10 million (£9.27 million) for the year to March 31, some £5 million behind what some analysts were expecting. The total dividend falls to 2.58p (3.44p), with a final 1.95p due August 11.

Sales of umbrella frames propped up its industrial products division, whose exporting arm saw profits decline from £3.3 million to £3 million. Yarns and fibres profit fell to £1 million (£3.6 million) after heavy costs setting up a US operation, which has since broken into profit. Its yarn spinning business lost £2 million after a plan to turn it around ran into difficulties. Brian Leckie, chief executive, said the dividend cut saves £1.78 million. He said: "We believe that the dividend was maintained without cover for too long."

Caffyns lifts payout

CAFFYNS, the motor dealer based in Sussex, is increasing the annual dividend for the first time this decade after pre-tax profits rose to £1.3 million from £629,000 in the year to March 31. The company reports a strong start to the current financial year. Turnover rose to £165.55 million from £160.5 million previously. The total dividend is lifted to 12.5p a share from 11.5p, with a 7.5p final. The shares rose 17½p to 320p yesterday.

Blick down at half time

SHARES in Blick, the electronic equipment company, fell 35p to 247½p as pre-tax profits fell from £7 million to £6.2 million after a disappointing performance from the Telecommunications subsidiary. Earnings fell from 15.26p to 13.54p but the half-year dividend is held at 4.5p. Alan Elliot, the chairman, said: "We have had a difficult half year. Remedial action has been taken and I believe that the second half of this year will be better than the first but is unlikely to match last year's."

Westminster acquisition

WESTMINSTER Health Care, the nursing home and health care group, has acquired PPP Beaumont, PPP Healthcare's nursing home and assisted living division, for a total of £22.6 million. PPP Beaumont, with net assets of £22.4 million at December 31, operates nine nursing centres with a further two under construction, comprising 510 registered beds with 148 assisted living apartments. In 1996, it earned pre-tax profits of £160,000 on turnover of £8.3 million.

Barcom sales increase

BARCOM, the building and construction group, raised pre-tax profits from £908,000 to £1.3 million in the six months to March 31, on sales up from £21.3 million to £27.2 million. Earnings per share rose from 1.7p to 2.2p and a maintained interim dividend of 0.5p will be paid. Barcom said all its operating divisions were profitable and continue to benefit from limited exposure to the construction sector. It added that recovery was evident in the level of construction activity.

Interim slip at Tunstall

SHARES in Tunstall Group fell 22p to 150½p after pre-tax profits for the six months to March 31 fell from £4.1 million to £2.9 million. It warned the market on prospects for the second half. The interim dividend rises from 1.68p to 1.85p, reflecting what directors say is "confidence in the future performance of the group". Earnings fell from 8.5p to 5.6p. The electronic equipment group says a major improvement in market conditions in the short term is unlikely.

Lookers moves ahead

LOOKERS, the Manchester motor distributor, raised pre-tax profits 27 per cent to £4 million in the six months to March 31 on sales up from £210 million to £290 million. Earnings fell from 6.7p to 6.2p. The interim dividend is held at 2.6p a share. Borrowings have fallen from 50 per cent to 43 per cent of shareholders' funds. Ken Martindale, the chairman, said: "We are now in a position to resume our growth" after the reorganisation following the Charles Hurst acquisition.

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FILM 1

Bruce Willis flounders in the aimless futuristic flab of Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element*



FILM 2

Crash proves to be a chilly exercise in perversity, but not worth all the outrage

THE TIMES
ARTS



FILM 3

A hijacked plane, lashings of violence: *Con Air* offers a pulverising night out



FILM 4

Melancholy Finnish humour comes from Aki Kaurismäki in the tender *Drifting Clouds*

CINEMA: Geoff Brown sees the French director Luc Besson pour \$90 million into the black hole of *The Fifth Element*

At the Cannes press conference for *The Fifth Element*, Bruce Willis said he enjoyed working at Pinewood studios, where Luc Besson's mammoth film was made under a thick veil of secrecy. But our catering came in for sharp criticism, especially the doughnuts.

It would be wrong to attribute the film's faults to Pinewood's food trolley. Even the best chef in the world would be powerless against Besson's incoherent English-language script, the less-than-special effects and the spectacle of impoverished imaginations running riot. Besson, the French wonderboy of *Subway* and *La Femme Nikita*, first thought of this subject as a teenager in the mid-1970s. Time has done nothing to improve the story's inconsequential and derivative tone.

Cars weave through the air through the concrete canyons of 23rd-century Manhattan. A malevolent planet threatens Earth with destruction. Bruce Willis sweats a lot in an orange singlet. Fearsome creatures shaped like metallic armadillos mass for business. Carrot-topped Milla Jovovich escapes from her genetic engineering lab to cavort in bandages and speak a language used in the Universe, so we are told, "before time was time". Gary Oldman, as the villainous Zorg, struts appallingly with a false leg, a southern accent and half of Hitler's hairdo. Ian Holm acts grumpy and wise, while Chris Tucker screams his head off as a DJ queen on a cruise ship circling outer space.

During this carnival of 1990s camp and comic-strip fun, audiences are forced to play Hunt the Plot. It can be found, just about. There are four ancient totems representing fire, earth, wind and water. Willis and Holm fight to control them, the only known weapons against the malevolent forces. But Besson obscures this narrative nub with so much disjointed blather that much potential drama is lost. A veteran of 12 *Monkeys*, Willis takes the foolishness in his stride; the work of other cast members ranges from the banalising (Jovovich) to the embarrassing (Oldman and Tucker).

The film also disappoints visually. Gaumont, the veteran company whose origins stretch back to 1895, stumped up \$90 million, a French record, to realise Besson's dream. The most glamorous assistants were chosen: costumes by Jean Paul Gaultier, design concepts by graphic novelists Moebius and Jean-Claude Mézières. But the Manhattan aerial views have a Toytown ring; the flying taxis look far too flimsy. Even when Besson's technical batonions deliver the goods, the jumble of props and irrelevancies fatigue and irritate.

On now to *Crash*, which, like most of David Cronenberg's adventurous films, would have passed through cinemas largely unnoticed were it not for the ban by Westminster Council, and the orchestrated howls of outrage from our self-appointed moral guardians. Now there is a large body of people eager to discover what the fuss is about. So what will they find? A striking film, but one cold as



Braces? Check. Ratty old vest? Check. Weapon set for blowing large holes in the scenery? Check. Bruce Willis brings his own special charms to the overblown futuristic melodrama of *The Fifth Element*

No real need to watch this space

so tightly controlled in image and word, so aloof from ordinary life and its characters' thoughts, that it defies audience involvement and ultimately enjoyment. Certainly it never begins to dilute, for all the sex and violence.

Deborah Kara Unger begins proceedings by rubbing her breasts against an aircraft. But it is cars, especially crashed cars, that engineer the ultimate sexual thrill. A collision involving James Spader (Unger's husband) and Holly Hunter provides an introduction into Elias Koteas's society of crash fanatics, who stage recreations of notorious accidents, like the one that finished James Dean. Koteas's aim, he says, is to use modern technology to reshape the human body. They make a fetish of their wounds. They make novel use of a car wash. Other things I cannot begin to describe.

Cronenberg did not need J.G. Ballard's visionary novel of 1973 to suggest these obsessions. His own work shows a parallel fascination with a dehumanised future and sex fused with technology. No matter how bizarre the spectacle, Cronenberg himself is completely at ease as he controls the subdued colour palette, choreographs the camera's slow glide over To-



Kari Väänänen and Kati Outinen in the Finnish minimalist Aki Kaurismäki's gloomy but enchanting *Drifting Clouds*

ronto's freeways, and tapers the actors' speech to a hush. Indeed the glacial, rigidly stylised mood is so omnipresent that it grows to swamp any element of drama. Ballard described his book as "a warning against that brutal, erotic and overlit realm that beckons more and more persuasively to us from the margins of the technological landscape". But Cronenberg numbs the audience so much that wider issues are hard to grasp; ultimately, the film becomes one damn car crash after another.

As for the media hysteria and the consequences for impressionable youth, there seem two likely lessons to be drawn from *Crash*: wear a seat belt when driving, and don't see any more Cronenberg films. The first is good advice, the second not, although this extreme and chilly exercise in perversity is hardly the director's best advertisement.

Con Air offers the "acceptable" face of movie violence: mammoth explosions, grinding serial killers, planes and cars colliding. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer is the master of the style, and his latest product will not disappoint anyone who goes to the cinema to be pulverised. A lumbering plane ferrying America's nastiest prisoners is hijacked by John Malkovich, alias Cyrus the Virus, who plans to fly them to freedom. Nicolas Cage, a parolee en route to domestic bliss, plays along with Cyrus while trying to alert the good guys on the ground. Actors and dialogue are smartly attuned; but they are eaten up by the billowing propane fire, the hurtling debris, and every

The Fifth Element

Empire, PG, 127 mins
Flabby sci-fi epic from Luc Besson

Crash
ABC Shaftesbury Ave
18, 100 mins
Buckle up for Cronenberg's controversial movie

Con Air
Odeon West End
15, 103 mins
Pulverising escapades in a hijacked plane

Drifting Clouds
Metro, PG, 96 mins
Minimalist delight from Finland

Men, Women: A User's Manual
Curzon Mayfair
12, 122 mins
The world according to Claude Lelouch

Alive and Kicking
ABC Shaftesbury Ave
15, 100 mins
Sympathetic AIDS drama

rollercoaster stunt that Bruckheimer and his British director, Simon West, can imagine. The film is ferocious in its attack on human sensibilities: I had to attend Evensong at St Paul's to recuperate.

Aki Kaurismäki, probably, will not be going to see *Con Air*. "I have no esteem for films in which people are slaughtered with guns in the name of entertainment," he has said. "If one starts to shoot and play with explosives, nothing will ever be enough. But if the film is pitched on a minimalist level, even the sound of a cough becomes dramatic."

Not every film by the Finnish chronicler of miserable lives proves his point, but the

wonderful *Drifting Clouds* does. This tale of a married couple fighting the recession features his trademark melancholy and absurdist humour. It is also unusually suffused with tenderness and stylised colours (sky blue predominating). There is even an optimistic ending.

You want the best for these characters, buffeted by fate and economics. There is Kati Outinen, hostess at a restaurant repossessed by the bank; there is her husband (Kari Väänänen), who loses his job driving taxis; there is their dog. All three face hardship with long, brave faces in dismal rooms given a fairy-tale glow by the bold, simple colours. A lovely film; see it.

Men, Women: A User's Manual Claude Lelouch's 35th film, showcases the French director's own peculiarities: a lush and dizzy photographic style, an obsession with fate, chance, and cross-cut lives, and a rash assumption of intellectual depth. Lelouch's mastery of technique allows for much entertainment, although as this self-styled *comédie humaine* proceeds, its blend of the flimsy and preposterous grows infuriating.

Two men spearhead the tangled plot: a businessman who makes headlines, played by a real-life equivalent, Bernard Tapie, and a failed actor turned undercover cop (Fabrice Luchini). Around them Lelouch weaves narrative hiccup, in-jokes and endless musings on life and happiness. With Fellini gone, few film-makers indulge themselves as much as Lelouch — and few film-makers need such indulgent audiences.

The Channel 4 film *Alive and Kicking* also requires forgiveness, although much of Nancy Meckler's film, written by Martin Sherman, author of *Bent*, has a winning and breezy spirit. Living with AIDS is the issue, and Sherman manages a well-rounded humorous treatment before his speeches grow strident. Jason Flemyng is the arrogant dancer faced with his own mortality, but it is Antony Sher who anchors the movie as the slightly disolute therapist who shows his new lover the way ahead.

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A PERFORMANCE THAT HAS
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SHE IS THE JEWEL IN
THE WEST END'S
CROWN
DAILY MAIL

Maria Callas
MASTER CLASS
THE INTERNATIONAL
HIT PLAY

LUPONE'S PERFORMANCE IS
ALL FIRE, POWER, PASSION
AND SUPERBLY TIMED MALICE

A HIT, A HIT
A SURE FIRE
HIT
SUNDAY TIMES

BEST PLAY
1996 TONY AWARDS

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Comedy With
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★★★★ "NEAR
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Every week, young film fans discuss some of the latest releases...

THE FIFTH ELEMENT
Tim Thornton, 21: A stunning sci-fi adventure. Ian Holm was excellent.
Damian Samuels, 20: The amazing special effects cannot quite conceal the lack of a decent plot.
Sarah Crook, 18: Gary Oldman was exotic.
Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 18: The set design and Jean Paul Gaultier's costumes help to

create an extraordinary vision of the future.

CRASH
Tim: An erotic but neurotic film that doesn't deserve all the hype.
Damian: A pile-up of tedious nonsense.
Sarah: Pushes film art into the mainstream.
Leslie: Forget *Playboy*, it's *Exchange and Mart* for me from now on.
CON AIR
Tim: Madness, mayhem and

murder abound in this year's first big summer release.
Damian: Hannibal Lecter meets Freddy Laker in this entertaining and explosive action flick.
Sarah: John Malkovich is supreme as the gang leader.
Leslie: A paint-by-numbers action thriller.



POP

Maria Bethania, the biggest singing star in Latin America, prepares to storm Drury Lane



THEATRE

The London International Festival of Theatre goes Chinese, but not convincingly

THE TIMES ARTS



OPERA

After a shaky start Tosca delivers the dramatic goods under canvas in Holland Park



TOMORROW

Roger McGuinn interviewed, and reviews of the top new albums on the Friday pop pages

Voodoo that she does so well

They call her the Queen of Brazilian music. And indeed, interviewing Maria Bethania is a bit like securing an audience at Buckingham Palace.

In the lobby of the hotel in Salvador where I was staying, a mad Brazilian composer had to be reckoned with. "Why should my Bethania spare time for some pesky English journalist?" he screamed at my energetic liaison lady, reduced to tears by the onslaught. Then the time and day of the interview changed twice. And finally, we had to find her: although her main home is in Rio de Janeiro, Bethania has recently taken up part-time residence in a yellow 19th-century villa overlooking the Atlantic in a friendly well-kept corner of Salvador (capital of the eastern state of Bahia), reached via rubble-strewn streets.

For more than 30 years Bethania has dominated the female pop-singing stakes, not just in Brazil, but all over Latin America. In 1979, she was the first woman singer in South America to sell a million copies of an album. Now aged 51, her unmistakable, smoky voice seems only to have improved with time. She is part of the small Brazilian superstar elite.

When she sang a brief live set in London three years ago at the Albert Hall, one reviewer oddly observed that "she could have been a major star in the West if she didn't sing in Portuguese", which was a bit like saying Ravi Shankar could have been a major star outside India if he didn't play sitar. Bethania, who goes down well on the Continent, was delighted by her first British outing, and this clearly

WORLD MUSIC:

James Woodall tracks down the Brazilian star, Maria Bethania

forms part of her decision to return to London with a new show, *Ambar* (Amber), on Sunday.

"I was very surprised by the enthusiasm of the reviews, and in the audience," she says, cradling a tumbler of Jack Daniels on ice. "It was as if all those English people knew and liked my work."

In truth most of the audience was Brazilian, as it probably will be at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane (an estimated 100,000 Brazilian expats in London will all want tickets).

It's hard to name a European or North American equivalent of Bethania: she looks like a cross between a vestal virgin, Elektra, and a more emphatically Indian version of Joan Baez. The only British stars she might vaguely resemble are Annie Lennox or Kate Bush, except that Bethania's career is three times their length.

She was born in the colonial town of Santo Amaro, one of eight children. An older brother is the poet-singer Caetano Veloso, whose influence on Bethania was immense. Over the years, he has composed dozens of songs for her.

"He and I are very close. With Caetano around there were always cinema, theatre, music in the household. He was the leader of a

group of us. Came the day when he said I should do a show on my own in Salvador, and I suppose that was the beginning.

"I was made for the stage," she purrs. Not yet 20 when she was called upon to replace a star in a show in Rio in 1965, she became an overnight sensation. In the same year, she consolidated this sudden superstardom with a rattle-rousing song called *Corcora*.

"It was a song about my region, the North East. There had been a military coup in Brazil in 1964: everything beautiful in Bahia seemed to have been invaded by it. Censorship became very fierce. In the song, an eagle swoops down on a calf with its claws, and takes it away to kill it. It was a subliminal message for the people, highly suggestive of what was happening to them."

Bethania was dubbed a protest-singer for her pains, but if anything has characterised her career since the 1960s, it is a refusal to continue in any easily identifiable vein.

"Every time I felt myself cornered by a contract or a deal I didn't like. I'd do something a bit mad — exactly the opposite of being trapped. I've changed record labels many times, and fought with all of them. I'm proud to say that I've fought with company bosses."

Only someone of Bethania's towering fame (at least in Latin America) could get away with such operatic conduct; and the more she spoke, the more like a diva she seemed.

"I can be romantic, aggressive, sweet, warm, I can protest — it



"I can be romantic, aggressive, sweet, warm, I can protest — it depends on the time and place," says the fiery diva, Maria Bethania

depends on the time and place." No wonder that Bethania always admired the greatest diva of them all, Maria Callas. "Even when she was being criticised I couldn't help being attracted to her, particularly because of her drama."

The other big theme in her life is religion. Bethania was educated in a convent until her teens, and has long had what she calls a "very special relationship" with the Virgin Mary — "She's a woman who's human, who cries," she says. As an adult, Bethania encountered the Afro-religion of Bahia, with its mix of Catholicism and voodoo ritual, called *candomblé*.

"It's an exuberant faith, full of music, and began with the slaves, who needed to express an abnormal joy in their state of deprivation by going over the top." Though she is careful to separate her art from

her faith, Bethania assiduously applies religious terminology to what she does on stage.

"The stage is sacred, like a church or *candomblé* house. I've always liked the rituals of religion because worship is a form of theatre. Everything I do on stage is a form of dedication."

This is what London will see on Sunday: a proud, priestess-like figure singing Brazilian songs old

and new, somehow transcending her own language. Bethania performs with heart — *coração*, a word to be heard many times in the show — and is a fearless communicator.

"I feel very Bahian, but I'm not a parochial person," she says. "I can sing anywhere: London, all ends of the earth."

● Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (071-945000)

Learning curve

A MASSIVE wooden cross, its apex raised at an angle of about 30 degrees to the ground, spans the panoramic stage at Holland Park. High up on it Cavaradossi has to paint his portrait of the Madonna and sing his Act I aria, *Tosca* in a hobbie skirt (for this *Tosca*, like one or two other recent stagings, is set in fascist Italy) has to totter down it for the love duet.

Henk Schut's structure for his own production is hardly

OPERA

Tosca
Holland Park

singer-friendly. It all led to a distinctly shaky first act, not helped by some flaccid and nervous conducting from Dominic Wheeler. But when *Tosca* came down to earth in the Farnese Palace and action was conducted at ground level, there was a mighty improvement. The Holland Park company has a star Scarpia in Jeffrey Carl, who took an iron grip on the performance. With his brown leather jacket and hair slicked back into a tiny pigtail, he is natural casting for Puccini's Bad Cop. His firm baritone has enough rasp to cut through the evening air under Holland Park's canvas.

Wheeler injected far more vigour into his young orchestra, and *Tosca* began to sound like a sensible popular choice for the opening of the summer season. But then Schut managed to spoil all by revealing a cage of political prisoners as *Tosca* plunges her knife into Scarpia's belly. Worse still, he releases them and has them tramp noisily across the back of the stage during the Act III dawn prelude. And during the opening bars of Act I the Marchese Attavanti was made to walk across the stage; Puccini kept her as a subject for Cavaradossi's paint brush, and he knew best.

Mark Hamilton, an experienced tenor, took a little time to find his way as the painter. The voice tends to plumminess and could do with more lyrical quality, but the "Vittorias" rang out firm and loud.

Sarah Rhodes in the title role is a soprano with plenty of weight and depth, and had considerable success in colouring and shaping *Vissi d'arte*, although as an actress as yet she lacks passion.

A second trio of principals opens tonight.

JOHN HIGGINS



Two chairs and a table: Huang Yaoguang and Wen Zhunwen explore issues of Chinese identity

China's takeaway

Blank-faced Chinese stand on escalators going nowhere much. An elderly Chinese woman plods grimly about her house. Tired-looking Chinese sit on a train taking them home at the end of the day. Hong Kong may be just a matter of days from rejoining the Motherland, but the evidence of Stanley Kwan's back-projections is that for most Hong Kongers the daily grind continues as usual.

At least Kwan's *Piece*, as the last of the four playlets that launch this year's London International Festival of Theatre is called, has a clear point or two to make. Sadly, that is not true of the evening as a whole. Danyu Yang, its begetter, asked directors from Beijing, Hong Kong and Taipei to create works that, in the words of the programme, "address the problem of Chinese identity" and "look specifically at the tense relationship between mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong". But much of the time they left this Westerner feeling he was blundering into a convoluted family argument that had begun 50, 100, 900 years ago.

THEATRE

Journey to the East
ICA

Leo Qi confronts a smooth Taiwanese travel agent with a hitman fleeing a killing he has perpetrated in Hong Kong. Since they call each other Brother Nine and Old Seven, it would appear that they belong to a secret society. Then the conversation turns to politics, and it begins to look as if they symbolise corrupt, phoney democracy. But, really, who knows? The piece would doubtless resonate in the East, but here it seems about as eloquent as, say, a debate about the relative merits of Lilley and Howard would be in Manchuria.

Reflection of the Moon on Er-Quan, by Edward Lam, is a bit more accessible. If one of the two deniered Hong Kongers chattering away speaks Chinese without benefit of subtitles, the other has wry things to say about the food, autos and gymnasia of his Texan hideaway. Still, I got more from *No Story About*

Chairs and Tables by the Beijing director Li Liu Yi, even though (or maybe because) not a word of either Chinese or English is spoken.

All four pieces — and, presumably, the three others that will replace them later this week — have been composed for two performers, two chairs and one table. But Li makes better use of this set-up than his fellow-directors. Nobody who knows anything about the Mao years will fail to understand the desperation of the man and woman who are flung onstage in their baggy togas and proceed to clean every last speck from the furniture before reverently swathing it in red cloth.

The frantic, obsessive behaviour continues even when the man has donned a suit. They laugh, sob, manically clean each other and themselves, fly apart, fling the chairs around, and... but I won't give away an ending that should provide a modicum of comfort to nervous Hong Kongers. Maybe reunification will be gentler than they fear.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Sacred and secular

CONCERT

Gabrieli Consort
New Connaught Rooms, WC2

OVER the years the Covent Garden Festival has explored a number of different venues, but the New Connaught Rooms was a strange choice as a setting for the *Venetian Coronation* programme offered by the Gabrieli Consort and Players. Liturgical reconstructions are not easy to bring off in concert, and the chanting of prayers and other parts of Mass in the sumptuously decorated but decidedly secular Grand Hall made for a rather uncomfortable experience. The programming exploited the Venetian link with some of the "war-like and amorous" madrigals from Monteverdi's eighth book of 1638 in the first half of the concert. The juxtaposition of sacred and profane can prove illuminating, but here the shift from the warfare of love to the ceremonial of St Mark's was too extreme to be effective.

Monteverdi's quasi-dramatic madrigals are demanding and require total assurance in ensemble and in the projection of the text. The Consort comprises some excellent singers, but in this repertoire it is simply not good enough to have eyes glued to the copies and an indecent level of fudging of the Italian. Ensemble

was generally shaky and not helped by poor intonation in the string bass. Native Italian groups have set new standards in madrigal-singing, and by comparison this seemed like a second reading-through, which reflects poorly on British musicians' capacity for interpretative insight.

The Consort was on more familiar territory with the ceremonial music of the Coronation of Marino Grimani as Doge. There was some fine solo playing (Jeremy West, cornet; Oliver Webber, violin) in the canzonas, and some well sustained declamatory singing from tenor Steven Harold and bass Francis Steele in the Mass by Giovanni Gabrieli. His *Omnes Gentes* provided a rousing tutti finale with enough sackbuts to satisfy any doge.

TESS KNIGHTON

Collapse of stout fellows

Kilkenny's Cat Laughs comedy festival never seemed devised to attract teetotalers. This annual invasion of comedians for a long weekend of comedy performed in every available pub, pub and theatre now also sees the arrival of large groups of young Irishmen with phenomenal thirsts and little deference towards hard-working performers.

This may not have come as a disappointment to the makers of stout who sponsor the event, but it did trouble more than one performer. Alan Davies did not react at all well when an afternoon reveller plonked his feet and pint pot on the comic's stage. Davies' teetichy, combative approach to such challenges never seemed like the right policy, and those comics more amenable to going with the beery flow received their rewards.

The Canadian Harland Williams probably has a routine, but he doesn't like to talk about it that much. Instead, he performed a set geared toward those who, for one reason or another, had a taste for raving free association and vocal cross-breeding between pop stars and a menagerie of sci-fi monsters. One could easily be forgiven for missing the family relationship between Michael Bolton and Chewbacca the Wookiee, or Elvis and a Tyrannosaurus rex, but when Harland presses the microphone to his lips and growls, screeches and croons, all becomes clear.

Gigs by the British comedians Bob Mills and Mark Steel demonstrated

COMEDY: Luke

Clancy at the Kilkenny Festival

that there is fertile ground for laughs on both sides of the political correctness divide. Mills has no shame when it comes to attacking the North of England ("... after all, that's what it's there for"), while Steel's set went as far as promoting a meeting the next day in support of a group of striking Belfast workers.

Despite their divergent political stances, both comics decided to pick on Manchester's aspirations to host the Olympic Games. In this particular contest, Mills' version of the opening ceremony, with a superannuated Terry Christian as compere, and a finale that involved the releasing of several homing pigeons, easily took the gold medal.

As well as stand-up, the festival also saw the screening of a new feature film by part-time stand-up and director, Mark Shanahan. *Separation Anxiety* is built around a simple, strong concept. Take the current crop of Irish stand-ups and weave bits of their stage personae into a story of contemporary Dublin.

Given the critical mass of comedians, the film should have been far funnier, but it at least provided a fresh cinematic version of the Irish capital, a location with apparently more than its fair share of lecherous voiceover artists and existentially tormented models.

Two very different types of Irish comedian topped and tailed the Saturday and Sunday of the festival. Owen O'Neill moved out of "straight" stand-up and into that territory where telling jokes blends into telling fireside stories.

His performance, *Shouting from the Scaffold*, wove a narrative from his time as a hod carrier on London building sites. O'Neill's often melancholic journey took him through various pubs, accompanied by a man called Pat the Dog, crashing through the roof of Hammersmith police station, and on to a sleepless night in an isolated Scottish hotel with a psychotic raw sausage eater for a roommate. There were fewer laughs than stifled tears in the routine, but it was nonetheless an impressive piece of storytelling.

Pat the Dog and the other boozing bricks from O'Neill's past might have given Graham Norton a tough time had the camp comedian ever shouldered a hod on their site. Early in the morning in a small bar theatre in Kilkenny, however, it was Norton who was dishing out the verbal abuse.

In between lessons in the more esoteric sexual practices of gay men and a fortune-telling session with an obese tinsel-covered Barbie doll called Princess Wishing Star, the comic took time out to explore the marital lives of the front row. Far from respecting badly, the audience warmed to Norton rapidly, and would have been eating out of his hand, if only they could have stopped laughing for long enough.

Let there be drums

DANCE

Les Ballets Africains
Hackney Empire

everybody sings. The dancers trace frenetic scribbles, each millimetre of the body in motion; dislocated, bobbing, shimmying. They shuffle their feet in repeated phrases.

As well as the balophone, we hear a flute and a kora, which has 22 strings and produces delicate, melodic notes, offering a rare island of lyricism amid a storm of percussion. There are big drums, small drums, two-ended drums and drums shaped like logs, drums that sound metallic or resonant, drums played with hands or sticks or implements like hooks. These combined for the evening's long and spectacular centrepiece, building a tumult of syncretic noise and creating a vivid tableau of contrapuntal groups.

The dancers sometimes beat drums or shake rattles, the musicians sometimes dance, the flautist does the splits and

scramble the air like someone fighting off an invisible swarm of wasps, jump as if trying to scramble up into the sky. It looks so intricately reckless that you think they are making it up, but then you see the wonderfully strict union of their formations and you realise that every tiny blip and squiggle has been choreographed.

Heritage has a political subtext in its message of Guinean unification; but what counts for us here is the limitless vitality and joyousness that spreads across the footlights.

NADINE MEISNER

VERDI FESTIVAL

Oberto in concert

at the Royal Festival Hall

Simone Young conductor

Barzeg Tumanyan *Oberto*

Elizabeth Connell *Leonora* Denyce Graves *Giulietta*

Susan Parry *Isabella* Stuart Neill *Riccardo*

Mon 9 June 7.30pm Box Office 0171 960 4242

Ticket: See 215 12.50 15.00 17.50 20.00 22.50 25.00

Ian McIntyre enjoys the posthumous memoirs of a scholar who saw the world with as much compassion as intelligence

A ride on history's branch line

THE END OF THE LINE
A Memoir
By Richard Cobb
John Murray, £20
ISBN 0 7195 5460 8

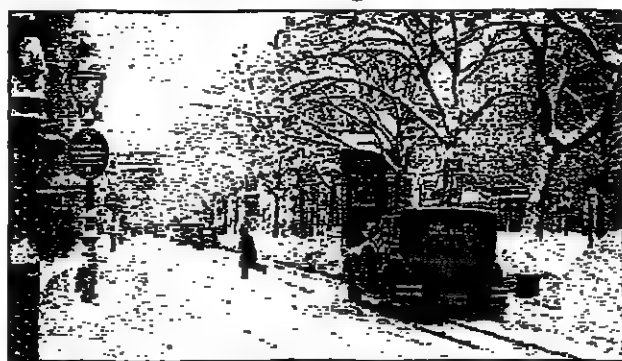
He is the Goya of our craft. Such was the admiring verdict of a fellow historian when Richard Cobb's *Paris and its Provinces* first appeared. This posthumous volume of memoirs is not the best of the 15 books he wrote in English over the past 30 years, but there are many good things in it. Personal reminiscence informed much of Cobb's writing, although he wrote no single or consecutive account of his life. This last reworking of autobiographical fragments rounds out most engagingly our picture of this outstanding historian of the common people of Revolutionary France.

In a series of talks which he gave on Radio 3 in the late 1970s, Cobb argued that there was one thing which neither this historian of *les petites gens* nor the novelist of urban or regional populism could do without — a sense of place that is concrete, almost physical, even if it is addressing itself to a town or a quarter or a landscape of nearly two centuries back.

He was extremely well-read in the work of such novelists, as it happens — Blaise Cendrars on Marseilles, Maxence van der Meersch on Roubaix, Raymond Queneau who wrote about the northern suburbs of Paris and about Le Havre. He particularly admired Queneau's *Le Roi des Rues* and in a letter to the *TLS* once praised Queneau's verbal inventiveness and enumerated his qualities as a novelist: his joyful humour, his innocence, his compassion and his enjoyment of "unelevated" company. It is not a

bad resumé of Cobb's own qualities as a writer, all of which find expression in *The End of the Line*.

The journey gets off to a slowish start. I found the account of his schooldays at Shrewsbury slightly laboured, but once he escapes to France for the first time both he and his prose are liberated. On Easter Day he attends Pontifical High Mass in the cathedral at Rouen. A devout young woman sitting close to him suddenly goes down on her knees, in the middle of the aisle, and kisses the Archbishop's large, reddish ring. "She kissed it gluti-



Portrait of a vanished age: winter in Vienna, 1932

tonously, almost as if she were going to eat the whole hand off as well." He is at his funniest describing a visit to pre-war Vienna. "Every time the train stopped, more and more members of the White Horse Inn cast got off, to be

replaced by others who began eating nasty-looking sausages with clasp knives. The whole scene was hideously, irredeemably rural." Later he is arrested for distributing political literature (Quaker leaflets, in fact), beaten up by the police and imprisoned as a Czech student. The British consul was a jolly, hearty man with a rugged face: "You seem to have got yourself into quite a mess, old man," he said.

In one of those American style pre-publication puff pieces which even respectable English publishers are now using, Sir Isaiah Berlin obligingly describes Cobb's style as "inimitable". It is certainly idiosyncratic — sentences that go on for half a page are a hazardous undertaking in any language. He writes at one point about Maupassant's "marvellously cut-down prose", but is not disposed to emulate it.

Cobb is also, in the nicest possible way, a tremendous show-off about how good his French is. His text is sometimes so heavily splattered with French words that it becomes a distraction ("André Dubuc was a retired schoolmaster, an *érudit local*, wearing the mauve ribbon of *les palmés*, who contributed numerous *glanes*, with commentary, to *Annales de Normandie*").

Frank about his own shortcomings ("I had always had enough self-knowledge to have known perfectly well that I was not, never could be, of potential officer material"), Cobb was remarkably tolerant of the defects of others. In the Army, he encounters a lieutenant with a bogus Oxford degree (the poor man happened to have hit on Cobb's own college at the time he himself was up): "I kept my information to myself; he had seemed a nice enough chap." What fascinated him about such cases of academic fraud was the modesty of their spurious claims: "Why a Third in English at Southampton, or a Second in Portuguese at London, when you might have offered yourself Firsts in Mods and Greats at Corpus?"

"I feel that the Old Enemy — the one with whom François Mitterrand has seemed to come to terms by a sort of private treaty — may indeed be spending a bit of time on my own case." Cobb's endpaper about the illnesses of his last few years is brief and unsentimental. He finished it, on a characteristically wry and gentle note, only two days before he died: "Not quite *une voix d'outre-tombe* — nor a Proust. But the best I can do for now."

In pursuit of the soul

Peter Ackroyd on how the 19th century changed our view of the world

There was a time when, in the salon, or concert room, the musicians could scarcely be heard above the cacophony of noise and gossip issuing from a relatively uninterested audience. Then, at some undetermined point in the 19th century, a "worshipful silence" began to prevail. In a quiet broken only by tears, music became a religious experience based largely upon self-communing. That transition is the theme of Peter Ackroyd's latest volume of 19th century studies: it is the fourth of a series devoted to what he terms "the bourgeois experience", and on this occasion undertakes a "great voyage into the interior" where the secrets of the human heart may be discovered.

Meanwhile, in *The Victorian World Picture*, David Newsome examines that new sense of life in the context of a broad cultural change; the Victorians believed that they were part of an age of transformation, and he depicts the intense self-consciousness of the individual as part of the self-consciousness of the period itself. It was a time of "excessive acceleration" in every conceivable direction with the most salient characteristic, according to one contemporary, of "SPEED". It is an insight which Newsome himself takes forward in his disquisition on class relations as well as transport, on religion as well as political economy.

But Gay's study allows us to slow down. He has pursued the El Dorado of the human heart in earlier volumes devoted to the experience of love and of conflict in the Victorian era; now he concerns himself with the elements of introversion in a period generally known for its public dogmas and no less public works. He has in a sense become the Proust of academic history, touching upon the strange stirrings of the human consciousness which lie beneath the volumes of recorded time. David Newsome takes a broader view, and his narrative is necessarily more circumspect on the tender issues of sensibility and conduct; but his transitions are very delicate and

graceful. It provides, in the language of the period, an interesting "diorama".

The Naked Heart may be more intimate and, in his intensive exploration of 19th century literature and art, Gay also discloses the myth by which the later 20th century still operates. We no longer invoke the pieties of "imagination" or "intensity", for example, but there is in certain quarters a residual belief in the pursuit of "originality" and "self-expression". Gay plots the trajectory of these relatively insignificant terms, and finds their origin in the boiling waters of German idealism; we in turn may be able to trace their setting in some of the muddier recesses of contemporary fiction.

There are other continuities and *The Victorian World Picture* might also be considered a study of our own time. Here we find the evidence of a backward educational system as well as "the intractable problem of Ireland", of scandals within the Queen's family and the collapse of Barings Bank. Yet something has been lost. The piety and earnestness of the 19th century have gone; we no longer see the world steadily, and as a whole.

A case can in fact be drawn from Gay's own thorough investigations. He is understandably sharp about the professed Christianity of the principal Romantic writers, believing it in spring from the sublime egotism of the truly great who can even remake God in their own image. Yet in large measure writers like Schiller and Chateaubriand were, in Gay's plangent words, "fighting for the re-enchantment of the world" after the scepticism and vapid deism of the Enlightenment. It is of course an old battle; the great division between writers has nothing to do with race or gender, but lies in the extent to which they adopt a secular or spiritual understanding of the world. Wordsworth's own poetry might be considered the ultimate exercise of romantic self-expression, but it might also be seen as the final triumph of European Protestantism. That age of strenuous faith has also gone.

The Naked Heart then, is concerned with the quest for self-definition. There is an excellent chapter here, for example, on the renaissance of autobiography in the 19th century. A bourgeois audience clamoured for the lives of heroes while at the same time novelists began to make elaborate use of first-person narratives from "Call me Ishmael" to "For a long time I used to go to bed early". It is not often that Melville and Proust can be seen as part of the same company.

That is indeed the strength of both books. The panoramic tendency has disadvantages, but its greatest virtue lies in Gay's ability to connect various aspects of literature which

are generally considered to be incompatible. In this context history and poetry, fiction and biography, can be seen as part of the same process. Those who claim pre-eminence for one form, or disparage another, are guilty of a grave cultural mistake. It is even possible, if present developments are to be trusted, that all generic boundaries will disappear.

The not necessarily compelling force of scientific "progress" can also be granted a small role here. Gay credits the institution of the penny post, for example, with the rise of the letter as the "token of true affection". In 1834, 76 million letters were delivered but, only 11 years later, that

figure had risen to 347 million. For once we may see clearly the influence of technology upon feeling.

This insight is representative of a book which, in large part, is concerned with the symbiotic relationship between individual sensibility and cultural orthodoxy. *The Naked Heart* reveals very clearly that the history of any culture is also the history of various bewildered, incomplete and "naked" selves: in turn Newsome's *Victorian World Picture* shows that the general culture is itself manifold and contradictory, precisely because it represents a multitude of conflicting impulses. Both books, then, depict the process of life itself.

rather abstract, unmovable for all his suffering. Crace best maintains Gally's mythological status when seen through the merchant's eyes. Like *The Great Gatsby* from Nick Carraway's point of view.

All seven characters will get something out of their journey, but not in ways foreseen. Even Musa, who despite losing his merchandise, escapes the wilderness by hitching a ride with passing travellers, trading on stories of survival. Survival by stories. Crace, too, is a storyteller of unique gifts. His evocation of the domestic details of an ancient world and the minutiae of a timeless desert landscape are thrilling.

Herod's Holy Land has never seemed so contemporary. The connections made, phrase by phrase, are sprung on hair-triggered verbs and every other sentence is a work of art. After the efficient but somewhat somnolent *Signals of Distress*, Crace has returned to form, producing one of the finest novels I've read in years. A place on the *NATF* Booker shortlist is the least it deserves.

Rachel Benjamin doesn't want to be married. Her parents choose a young man anyway, shave off all her hair and deliver their teenage daughter to his amateur grippings. Pearl Abraham describes each step with chilling sympathy and obvious knowledge. Set among New York's Hasidic Jews, *The Romance Reader* is a moving coming-of-age story which also provides rare insight into a tight-knit and very alien American community.

Rachel is the oldest of seven children — an example for younger siblings and, as the daughter of a rabbi, an example to outsiders, too. For Rabbi Benjamin is the shepherd of a depleted Hasidic neighbourhood, out on the street corner each week, corralling the ninth and tenth man into synagogue for *minyan*. His wife, meanwhile, eyes him wearily from behind drawn curtains. A lifetime of cleaning and pregnancy has left her bitter — and willing to resort to petty deceit (the rhythm method) to regain some control of her life.

As the novel opens, it is Rachel's parents who break Hasidic law, climbing stealthily into a taxi in the middle of the night on the Sabbath to drive to hospital for the birth of their seventh child. The car's engine disturbs the night, and Rachel realises, "the noise, an everyday, sounds sinful to me on Shabbat". This tension, between the familiarity of ritual and the risky pleasures of disobedience, shapes her story.

She depends on herself for survival

Frances Stead Sellers

THE ROMANCE READER

By Pearl Abraham
Quartet Books, £11
ISBN 0 7043 8330 1



Abraham: affecting

Rachel deliberately fails to live up to the standards of religious law that the Hasidic couple expect. To an outsider, her sins seem innocent enough: she wears a bathing suit that shows her legs when she swims, lingers over the non-kosher food on the supermarket shelves, and slips off her thick, scented hose in favour of sheer stockings when she leaves the house. But when Rachel sets aside Hebrew texts for tawdry Eng-

lish novels — romances by Barbara Cartland, Charlotte Brontë and Victoria Holt — her father views her reading as a dangerous act of betrayal: "The Jews survived in Egypt because of three things," he warns. "They didn't change their names, they didn't change their clothes, and they didn't change their language. Could we depend on you for our survival?" Rabbi Benjamin reminds his daughter of the prophet's warning to the people of Judea — and of the sin of assimilation: "A Jew is never liked by other nations. A Jew reads only Jewish books and must remain separate."

For her literary escapism, Rachel is found guilty, and her guilt haunts her. The courtship her parents arrange and supervise never matches up to the empty romances that fire her teenage imagination. So it is hardly surprising that, as Rachel approaches marriage, she transfers her anger to her awkward young husband, prompting some of the novel's most poignant scenes.

Written in the first person, *The Romance Reader* may not be autobiographical in the most literal sense, but it is surely based on Pearl Abraham's own knowledge of Hasidism. And it is that privileged viewpoint which makes this memorable first novel so very affecting.

Frances Stead Sellers is an editor of the *Outlook* section of *The Washington Post*.

Miraculous prose

Russell Celyn Jones

QUARANTINE
By Jim Crace
Viking, £10.99
ISBN 0 670 85465 5

and helps himself to water. He casually touches Musa, as a way of giving thanks, and unwittingly heals the dying man. But Musa — a bestial tyrant, a rapist, Satan, no less — is a man the world would have been better without. Thus Jesus creates his own bad luck through a random levitation.

Musa, convinced he's the beneficiary of a miracle, wants to lure Gally out of his cave. With his supernatural gift and Musa's trading aplomb together they could clean up in the market. "To buy and sell is just as spiritual as prayer or going without food," he

opines. And it is Musa's scheming that generates the narrative. Claiming ownership of the desert he rents caves to the four pilgrims. Unlike Gally, they break fast every evening and Musa sells them food and water. But he fails — three times, naturally — to tempt Gally, who pays for his resolve with his life: an outcome that corresponds with early Christian belief that Christ was an apparition.

Gally is not yet the Son of Man, just a "boy" full of idealism. "He was transformed by God like other boys his age: were changed by girls". His Mission is only dimly intuited and his life is as much a charade as the next compulsive obsessive. His quest in the wilderness for spiritual truth is a pursuit of adult identity. As a writer Crace is lean and aesthetic. He is also omniscient and dispassionate. Consequently Gally's soliloquies come across as

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Both feet on the floor

Peter
Stothard
devours a
new look at
ancient love

The sexual positions portrayed on Classical Greek vase paintings are rarely those recommended by the Christian missionary. Occasionally a man and a woman can be pictured on a wine cup with a mutually tender gaze and their bodies hidden under a sheet. More often the banquet of ancient Athens were served from plates and pots bearing a Kama Sutra of exotic copulation — a fact which in the 20th century has brought both embarrassment for scholars and opportunities for some of their wilder theoretical adventures.

One approach has been to pretend that the sexual acts painted on the kitchenware were not actually happening. Pictures of grappling male homosexuals could be captioned as preparation for the wrestling match. Priapic old men tempting boys with delicacies of hare or fowl were seen as haggards at the butcher's shop. Brothel scenes, in which the girls did a bit of spinning to pass the time between clients, were part of the artistic heritage of the woolen industry.

A more modern scholastic device has been to apply a protractor to each sexual position and to ascertain thereby the degree of political and social domination implied. The prime assumption in such studies is that the dominant partner must be exploiting his victim. To be taken from behind is, according to this theory, an especially passive and submissive experience, representing the structure of class discrimination and abuse in Greece's allegedly Golden Age.

For the past seven years James Davidson has pored over plates, wine jars and poetry and come up with an altogether more relaxed interpretation of sensual life in the time of Pericles, Socrates and Plato. *Courtesans and Fishcakes* is about sex, food and drink and the part that all three played in developing Athenian identity. Where others have found exploitation and outrage, Davidson is more likely to have found fun.

Why, for example, does so much sexual activity seem to take place with both partners' feet on the floor? Not, he says, because of any desire to humiliate but because illicit liaisons so often happened out-of-doors, their secrecy always vulnerable to exposure by cuckolded husbands or curious passers-by. Athenian lovers, particularly the sort



Sensual life in the time of Pericles: amorous encounter between a man and a woman depicted on an Attic red-figure and white ground vase (circa 530-430 BC); from K. J. Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* (Duckworth, £12.95)

COURTESANS AND FISHCAKES
The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens
By James Davidson
HarperCollins, £25
ISBN 0 00 25591 3

whose stories appealed to the dinner party carousers, had to be quick on their feet.

The Greek word *katapugon*, which is often translated to mean a pathetic object of lust, is seen by Davidson, with respectable authority from the dictionary, as meaning more broadly a lewd and lascivious person, someone who does not see sex as an assault but who instead actively enjoys it. This meaning makes good sense of an otherwise awkward passage in Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* in which the heroine attacks her fellow women who would rather go through fire than join her anti-war sex-strike. "How wholly *katapugon* is our species," she says in

an outburst which Sir Kenneth Dover, one of the most distinguished sex-politics theorists, rendered lamely as "what a miserable bloody lot we women are". To the translator Alan Sommerstein, writing from the Davidson camp, Lysistrata's cry fits in far better with the plot as "what an absolute rage of nymphomaniacs we are".

Another scholastic squabble concerns an early Classical vase in which a Greek man, his penis in his hand, rushes towards the backside of a barbarian buffoon who is saying "I am Eurymedon, I bend over". This has been often interpreted as a patriotic commentary on the great Greek victory over the Persians by the river Eurymedon in about 460 BC. Dover, using his passive-homosexual-equals-political-loser model, translates this as "we've buggered the Persians". Davidson convincingly argues that the Greek in the picture does not look like a soldier, that the buffoon need not be a

Persian and that the act of "buggery" in the scene is more a matter of hope, on both sides, than achievement. He sees the cup as a simple dinner party joke and Eurymedon as some long-forgotten orgiast. Throughout this most enjoyable book about enjoyment, the academic jousting goes on. Davidson does not claim to clarify every obscure point. Even he must admit defeat in deciphering the sexual position described in Greek as "the lion on the cheese-grater". But he spars with Foucault and Freud, biographers and bishops, with open glee.

If anything, Davidson enjoys his fishcakes even more than he enjoys his courtesans. Modern visitors to Greece see fish as the staple of local diet. But in Classical times — with seafaring dangerous and preservation methods poor — good fish was a rare and maddeningly desirable delicacy. If an Athenian man were to squander his patrimony or let his wife and children go hungry, the

reason would more likely be a beautiful girl than a slender girl or boy. Famous prostitutes' names included "red mullet", "cuttle fish" and "the anchovy sisters". A sour commentary on their personal hygiene? More probably a sign of value, like a gangster calling his molls Diamond and Pearl.

In an age when public life was the predominant life of Greece and when meat-eating was part of organised public religion, fish was part of the slowly growing private sector. Davidson's fishcakes — and his courtesans too — represented the growth of personal and private space in city life, space in which anyone who could afford the best for themselves got it. The moral issue was not so much what they should do but how much. "Nothing in excess" remained the mantra for Greek behaviour throughout the period described in this book: but it was an axiom much honoured in the breach and always tested when the plates were set out for a party.

Orlando Figes on Eric Hobsbawm's lost hopes

Revolution in the head

Eric Hobsbawm is probably the best-known living historian in the world. Millions of people have read his many books — especially the quartet of global histories ending with his overview of the 20th century in *Age of Extremes* — in more than a dozen different languages. He is also a communist, an unrepentant advocate of the Soviet system (even after the lessons of 1989). This may seem ironic: how many book clubs realise they're peddling Marxist literature? But in fact the key to his achievement and appeal is his Marxist approach to history.

In this collection of 21 essays and lectures, published to mark Hobsbawm's eightieth birthday, he sets out his credo as an historian. Some of his opinions are rather hard to swallow, and I suspect that when he told a group of Hungarian students in 1993 that "for the common citizens of the more backward countries" of Eastern Europe the Stalinist epoch "was probably the best period in their history", he lost many friends. Non-specialists will not be entertained by the nine central essays that focus on Marxist theory, economic history and historiography. But they will be impressed by the tremendous range of his erudition and the brilliant incisiveness of his analysis. Marx himself would have been impressed.

Hobsbawm's life runs like a red thread through the history of the Marxist movement in this century (it was his personal recollections that made his *Age of Extremes* so good). Born symbolically in 1917, he spent his childhood in Vienna and Berlin during the years of Hitler's rise to power, and studied at Cambridge in the 1930s, when it was a hotbed of communism. The war years found him serving in the Pioneer Corps; it was the time of the grand alliance with the Soviet Union, when sympathy for Soviet Russia became almost part of the establishment.

In his later years as an historian, Hobsbawm's Marxism provided him with a method of analysis rather than a series of political conclusions, although as an old man he retains the passionate commitments of his youth (in one of his essays he even argues that historians should be partisan). Marxism gave him a formula to analyse the evidence and synthesise the work of other specialists. Apart from his two important early books,

Primitive Rebels (1959) and *Labouring Men* (1964), which pioneered the study of social protest and labour history, his work has not been based on original research.

He is in this sense a generalist, drawing broad conclusions from the primary research of younger scholars (who might never otherwise have seen the general point), and always striving for what the French call "total history". He has written on almost everything: revolutions, nationalism, empire and culture; peasants, bandits, mafias and obscure labour sects.

For a Marxist this is rather heterodox. There was little place for such marginal groups in the Marxist orthodoxy, grimly dedicated to the proletariat. And, arguably like Marx himself, Hobsbawm is no economic determinist. There was no translation of Hobsbawm's work in Soviet Russia.

Yet, like all Marxists, he sees history as a social science and believes with passion in studying the past to discover general laws of societal development that, if applied correctly, may reshape the world. As an empiricist, he holds firmly a common-sense belief in historical facts (the Nazi gas ovens *did* exist) and is at his most convincing when rejecting those post-modernists who would deny this belief as a premise for research, nationalists who misuse history and ignore the facts, or historians who in-

dulge in games of "counter-factual" history.

At the heart of Hobsbawm's Marxism is a belief in historical progress, defined here by him (and paraphrasing Marx) as man's growing capacity to control nature. This materialist conception of history, which has its roots in the Enlightenment, unites him with non-Marxists such as the late (and much lamented) Ernest Gellner. But one result of it, in Hobsbawm's case, is to ignore the awkward bits of history.

Nowhere is this clearer than in his essays on the Russian Revolution, upon which his entire world-view has been based. It is simply wrong to argue, as he does, that there was no alternative government to the Bolsheviks in October 1917; or to claim that the terror they unleashed in their early years of power was necessitated by the civil war.

At the end of perhaps the finest (and certainly the most personal) essay in this book Hobsbawm confesses: "Much of my life, probably most of my conscious life, was devoted to a hope which has been plainly disappointed, and to a cause which has plainly failed: the communism initiated by the October Revolution. But there is nothing which can sharpen the historian's mind like defeat." Brave and moving words.

Orlando Figes is the author of *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1917-1924* (Cape, £25), which this year has won the NCR Prize for Non-Fiction, the W.H. Smith Literary Award, the Longman History Today Award, and together with Eric Hobsbawm (for his life achievement) the Wolfson History Prize.



Hobsbawm: erudition and brilliantly incisive analysis

The stormy reality of a Lakeland idyll

Ann Thwaite

A PASSIONATE SISTERHOOD
The Sisters, Wives and Daughters of the Lake Poets
By Kathleen Jones
Constable, £20
ISBN 0 09 47630 1

In the first volume of Richard Holmes's biography of Coleridge there is only one mention of his daughter, Sara: "I had never thought of a girl as a possible event," he told Southey; "however I bore the sex with great fortitude." In fact which sex she was made little difference. Coleridge hardly knew her as a child. Sara graphically describes the uneasy feelings shared by many children of separated and quarrelling parents, that "sense that you have done very wrong, or at least given great offence, you know not how or why — that you are damned for some payment of love or feeling which you know not how to produce... chills the heart, and fills it with perplexity and bitterness."

"Bearing the sex" was, of course, much more of a problem for "the sisters, wives and daughters of the Lake Poets" than it was for the poets themselves: Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, Sara Coleridge suffered, as they all did, from a climate which

made it almost impossible for a woman to achieve a fulfilling life. "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life," Southey wrote to Charlotte Brontë. The blurb inevitably suggests that these women's letters and journals contribute to a fuller understanding of the poets. That is still usually seen as the justification for writing about women, when, in fact, the lives themselves are sufficient justification. There have in the past been interesting biographies of several of these women, of Dorothy Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth and earlier of both Sara Coleridge, the wife and the daughter; but Kathleen Jones

has taken on the more complex challenge of a group biography to show the reader the intercrossing lives of the women. That some of them were sisters is true, but they were in no sense a united "sisterhood". Their shared lives often produced jealousy and friction. They were, on the whole, more interested in their men than in each other.

All three of the poets were in triangular relationships: Wordsworth with his wife and his sister, Coleridge with his wife and with Wordsworth's sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson. Southey with his wife and his wife's sister, who was Coleridge's estranged wife. As the daughters grow up there are just too many women surrounding these men, doing everything for them ("almost his very Eating and Drinking", as Coleridge wrote of Wordsworth). It is sometimes difficult to retain a clear picture of their separate painful lives. Several of them, including Mary Wordsworth, remain obstinately shadowy. Money is always a problem,



Cousins: Sara Coleridge (left) and Edith May Southey

and so is health. Children die (all the poets lost young children, Southey four); daughters' marriages are opposed; there are breakdowns and declines into insanity. There are endless frustrations resulting from dependence. Dora Wordsworth, though apparently far more clever than her

brothers, was given little encouragement to do anything with her life. She called Rydal Mount "Idle Mount" and idleness was not a pleasure.

The story of the Coleridge marriage always makes sad reading. It is curious to find Jones suggesting that an image still prevails of Sara as a

"domestic cypher", after Molly Lefebure's biography over 10 years ago. She was in her way as remarkable as her daughter. "I blame no one," she once said, remaining obstinately loyal to the great genius to whom ordinary rules did not seem to apply. It was Southey who said that Coleridge's habits were "so murderous of all domestic comfort" that she should have rejoiced at being rid of him.

It is a considerable achievement to tell the connecting stories of so many women in fewer than 300 pages; a huge amount of research and thought obviously lies behind the book. It inevitably suffers, as all group biographies do, from a change of foreground subject just as the reader's interest is thoroughly engaged. The Coleridge wedding at the end of one chapter, for instance, gives way to the birth of Dorothy Wordsworth at the beginning of the next. They were interesting women and deserve to be written about. The calm jacket painting of a woman reading by candlelight gives little indication of the turbulent emotions within the pages of this book.

Ann Thwaite's biography of Emily Tennison: the Poet's Wife, will be published in paperback by Faber in September.

Substantial sibling rivalry

Sean French

THE HUNDRED BROTHERS
By Donald Antrim
Secker & Warburg, £9.99
ISBN 0 436 20407 X

As a person who has trouble remembering which of the three Karamazov brothers is which, I must confess that my heart sank at the prospect of a novel featuring no fewer than a hundred brothers. Antrim's strange tale is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the notion of brotherhood, brotherly love, fraternal feeling.

This story is set entirely in the library of a decaying country house during the course of a single night. The hundred brothers, who range in age from their twenties to their nineties, gather for a

reunion dinner and do the sorts of things that brothers do: joshing, fighting, exchanging yarns, playing games, talking about what unites

them and what separates them. The activities can be friendly but underneath it all is that brutal rivalry between brothers that occurs so often in mythology. As the narrator puts it, in a fair summary of the book's action: "Emotions heat up and tempers break out in real disputes that have their roots in a hundred contingent histories of the standard childhood competitions, degradations, reparations, punishments, tortures — all the gory

excitements of pain and power that seem, in respect, so ineluctably linked with childish fantasies about manhood".

The narrator of this all-too-symbolic tale is himself a symbol, a genealogist, a man obsessed with family trees, with what binds us to our ancestors: "The student of human births and deaths will experience, perhaps as a distant and unaccountable memory, the traces of very old affections, all the joys and

disappointments that have forever bound people together in families."

By creating this impossibly vast collection of brothers, Antrim is making a complex connection between the family and larger units such as the tribe or the society, and examining the dark forces that bind individuals. In the horrifically violent climax of the novel, we discover that this family is actually a tribe which renews itself through sacrifice.

Donald Antrim is a writer of considerable gifts, but I was never convinced that this cumbersome allegory was rich or various enough to sustain an entire novel (Shirley Jackson told much the same story much more effectively in her classic short story *The Lottery*). Families don't need to be made strange by giving them a hundred brothers and no visible parents. They are strange already. If you feel the need to make football matches more interesting by putting a hundred players on each side, then the problem is with you rather than football.

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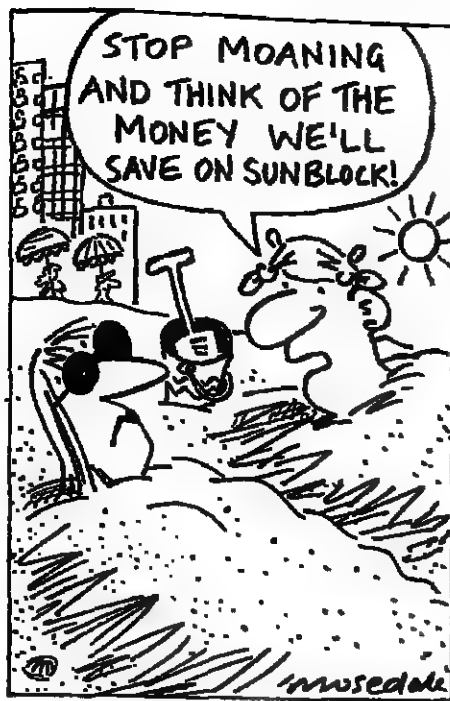
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Sunbathers face increased risk of skin cancer



IT'S A sobering thought after a week of unbroken sunshine, but sunbathing claims 1,800 lives in Britain each year, nearly half as many as road accidents, and the numbers are rising rapidly.

Nearly 40,000 people develop skin cancer annually, 50 per cent more than 25 years ago, when the advent of cheaper holidays abroad meant that millions could suddenly afford a break in the sun, exposing themselves to harmful ultra-violet rays, often with little or no protection.

It takes ten to 15 years for skin cancers to develop, so doctors expect the numbers will continue to rise because of the constant growth in the number of sunshine holidays and the fashion for golden tans throughout the Eighties.

Parents, too, are blamed for exposing their children to too much sun. We absorb half our lifetime's ultra-violet rays as children, and the rest of it during an average of 39 days a year on holiday or at weekends.

You do not need to go to the Mediterranean to get sunburnt. With long-range forecasters predicting that our climate will become warm enough to produce good red wines within the next 30 years, doctors are becoming increasingly alarmed at the blasé way the British,

By IAN MURRAY

particularly males, continue to go out in the midday sun. Figures show that skin cancer is more prevalent in coastal areas. This is not only because people living there tend to sunbathe more often, but because they are retirement areas which attract well-to-do pensioners who have probably spent many holidays in the sun during their working lives.

The growth in skin cancer has led the Health Education Authority to declare this Sun Awareness Week to educate people about the dangers of overexposure to harmful rays. The basic rules are never to go outside between 11am and 3pm without a sunblock cream of at least factor 15.

Dr John Hawk, consultant dermatologist at St Thomas's Hospital in London, says there is no point in buying anything with a sun protection factor of less than 15. "The lower-factor creams are almost useless," he says. "There is no real advantage in putting them on. It is just a pharmaceutical ruse to obtain money."

Even better than a sunblock, he says, is to wear broad-brimmed sun hats and cotton clothes to cover as much of the body as possible. He points out that Arabs cover themselves with flowing robes from head to toe. "There is no

such thing as a healthy tan," he says. "If the skin turns brown, it shows that it has been damaged."

Katie Aston, the Health Education Authority's campaign director on cancer, says that sunbathing by men is the most worrying development. A third more men than women develop malignant melanoma, but a third more men than women die of it. Slightly more men than women develop non-melanoma cancer but almost double the number of men die of it because they report it when the condition is too advanced for successful treatment.

"Men are less likely to aspire to a tan and more likely to burn," says Ms Aston. "They seem to think that it is really hunky to take their shirts off. But a sunburnt chest isn't attractive, and nor is cancer."

"Women are more used to putting cream on their faces and are therefore much readier to use sunscreens. By the time they are 13, girls start to want a tan because they think it is sexually attractive, but by the time they are 28 they have got their man and become less interested in it. There are signs that they start tanning again when they are 45 because the children are off their hands and they want to reassert themselves."

Sterling boost for France

By STEVE KEENAN

THE surge in sterling strength following the French elections should further boost the recovery in demand for summer holidays across the Channel this year.

With tourist rates nudging £9.3 to the pound, the market to France is up by a quarter this summer. Top-of-the-range villas and cottages are the first to sell out in peak school holiday weeks.

Francophiles are unlikely to find their first-choice holidays, say tour operators, who are concentrating on selling their "shoulder season" stock of June and September holidays.

Just France this week reported that its sales have doubled over 1996. John Parker, managing director, said: "We do have some prime properties available in high season — but this is only as a result of cancellations."

VFB Holidays reported sales to France were up 20 per cent, with Corsica showing the biggest increase. And Thomas Cook reported sales of package holidays to France up 24 per cent to the end of April.

Holidaymakers are also unlikely to find as many bargains for cross-Channel travel this year. The French Government this week gave the go-ahead for the merger of P&O and Stena Line on ferry routes from Dover and Newhaven. The companies were meeting European Union officials last night and await UK Government approval.

The two companies believe they can put a merged operation into effect within two weeks, reducing Dover-based ships from nine to six and hardening summer prices.

Le Shuttle has also stuck to peak prices of £169 return compared to £129 last summer. Both the ferries and tour operators are looking to make money after four years of decline in the French market.

The Dover Harbour Board yesterday reported that its passenger numbers were up 26 per cent to the end of May, compared with the same five-month period last year.

One sector under-performing is that of tents and mobile homes. Sales of apartment holidays are also below the average increase. The best bargains are to be found in these two markets. Keycamp has cut prices for two-week camping holidays by up to £230 for July, while apartment holidays on the French Riviera have been reduced by up to £400 by Just France.

Medals for clean team

By IOLA SMITH

MORE than a thousand volunteers who helped to clean up the Pembrokeshire coast after last year's *Sea Empress* oil spill were yesterday awarded specially struck medals by the Welsh Tourist Board. Their actions and the effectiveness of the operation, they were told, averted long-term economic damage to the region's tourism industry.

Oakwood Leisure Park, Narberth, Pembrokeshire, home of Europe's largest wooden roller-coaster, has won the large business category in the 1997 Wales Tourism Awards. The ten-year-old business welcomes 430,000 visitors a year.

The medium-sized business award went to Llangorse Rope Centre, Brecon, an activity centre offering abseiling, climbing and caving. Llanglofan Farmhouse, Haverfordwest, won the small business category for its farm holidays and cheese-making.

Hotels pass the green test

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

ONE OF Britain's leading long-haul tour operators has drawn up a "green list" of environmentally friendly hotels in the Caribbean after an impassioned plea from the Prince of Wales.

The Prince's article — in *Green Hotelier* magazine — argued that the world's most beautiful places were often ruined by uncontrolled development.

"For many places, the process of uglification through insensitive development for mass tourism and the destruction of natural environments, townscapes and fragile ecosystems have demonstrated vividly and tragically the limits to sustainability," the Prince wrote.

His words prompted British Airways Holidays (BAH) to conduct a survey among its customers. More than half said they would choose an airline or tour operator which took into account environmental issues.

"We decided to see whether they would put into practice what they said to the researchers," said Roger Heape, BAH's managing director. "We will monitor what happens and if sales go up among the hotels we have identified we will extend the idea to other parts of the world."

German tourists already demand proof that their hotel is environmentally friendly and other British tour operators are certain to follow BAH's initiative.

More than 100 hotels were surveyed by the International Hotels Environment Initiative

(IHEI) and the Caribbean Hotel Association.

Thirteen were identified as having the best environmental practice, achieving at least a 75 per cent "pass rate" in key areas, including staff training, monitoring of energy consumption, waste management, control of hazardous chemicals, links with the local community, keeping buildings in local style and purchasing policies.

Each of the hotels meeting the criteria will be given a logo to use in BAH brochures. "The logo will allow people to consider environmental practice when making their holiday choice," Mr Heape said.

Prince Charles argued that companies and governments were "gradually coming to appreciate" sometimes when it is too late, the almost unstoppable seeds of destruction for the unsightly parts of our world which drive the quest for travel in the first place.

He railed against "bad-mannered development" and said that there were "too many eyesores in the world designed as cheap, featureless dormitory blocks with no regard to how the building blends in with its surroundings."

He added: "As travel and tourism grow, so does the demand for new hotels and resorts at affordable prices, many in ecologically delicate and desirable sites. So, environmentally, socially and aesthetically responsible hotel-building design and construction is in my view the foundation from which the industry can develop sustainably."

The 13 hotels which meet the IHEI criteria are: Galley Bay, Antigua; Comfort Suites, Bahamas; Biras Creek Resort, British Virgin Islands; Rex Grenadian, Grenada; Half Moon Club, Jamaica; Sandals Resort Negril, Jamaica; Rendezvous, St Lucia; Casuarina Beach Club, Barbados; Cambridge Beaches, Bermuda; La Source, Grenada; Spice Island, Grenada; Sweep Away Resorts, Jamaica; Sans Souci Lido, Jamaica.



IHEI environment logo



Biras Creek in the Virgin Islands is one of the resorts to pass the IHEI environment test

Singapore falls short of its tourism target

By JON ASHWORTH

SINGAPORE is falling behind in its drive to become the tourism hub of South-East Asia, despite a high-profile advertising campaign spanning two continents.

Visitor arrivals rose only 3 per cent last year — well short of the ambitious target set by Singapore's planners.

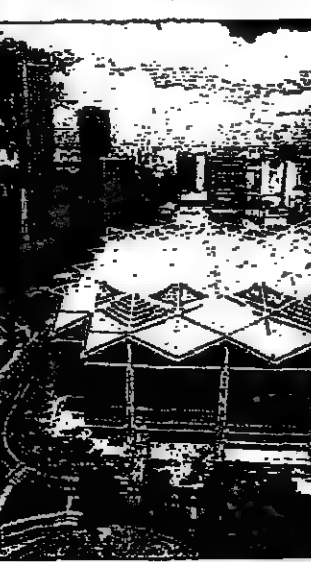
The city state needs arrivals to rise 6.4 per cent a year to hit its target of ten million visitors by 2000. The number of visitors tailed off sharply two years ago, prompting planners to rethink their tourism strategy. They are trying to broaden Singapore's appeal, playing on cultural diversity and selling it as a clean, efficient gateway to the beaches of Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

In Japan, the biggest source of visitors to Singapore, subway stations have been blanketed with the theme Singapore Fever. In Taiwan, the theme is Singapore Storm. In the UK, Singapore is sold as an ideal entry point to South-East Asia, using the slogan "So easy to enjoy, so hard to forget."

Tourism chiefs have committed £140 million towards an aggressive promotional campaign but have yet to make significant inroads. Drawbacks include the

strength of the Singapore dollar, which makes accommodation and entertaining expensive, and competition from neighbouring Malaysia, which is fighting fiercely for its own share of the market.

Singapore's booming status



Business visitors are the main prize

as a cruise-ship hub counts in its favour. And a 60,000 sq ft exhibition and convention centre, due to open late next year, will allow Singapore to compete with established destinations such as Germany for a bigger slice of the conventions market.

Business travellers remain

an important source of revenue for Singapore, accounting for 80 per cent of bookings at new hotels such as the Ritz Carlton, Millenia, where rooms cost from \$340 (£186) per night. The hotel opened in January 1996 and has 610 rooms, including 19 executive suites, and is close to the existing conference and exhibition facilities.

Occupancy at Singapore's 29,000 hotel rooms averages 75-80 per cent. The Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) remains confident that its tourism drive will pay off. Lin Net Koh, deputy director of corporate development at the STPB, says: "We have not met our target yet, but it takes time." The new convention centre will be a "very important draw" when it comes to pulling in foreign earnings.

Some 7.22 million people visited Singapore last year, 70 per cent of them from within Asia. Japan tops the list, with nearly 1.2 million arrivals (according to 1995 figures), followed by Indonesia (just over 1 million), Malaysia (681,000) and Taiwan (563,000). The UK leads the field among visitors from Europe, with 288,000 arrivals in 1995, down from a high of 311,000 in 1993.

Goa cracks down on drugs traffic

By CATHERINE CHETWYND

POLICE in Goa are cracking down on young tourists found in possession of drugs. "We are not interested in drug tourism," says Inspector General Brar of the Indian police. "The law is very, very severe. The minimum penalty is ten years' imprisonment for even very small quantities of hashish."

Sue Wheat, of the environmental pressure group Tourism Concern, said: "In Third World countries, the risk of children getting involved with drugs is greater because of the disparity between tourists' lifestyles and that of the local population."

A spokesman for the High Commissioner for India in London said the authorities were fighting a battle of economic realities. "We are trying to promote tourism in the area but don't want that to be at the expense of local traditions."

The issue is broader than drugs. Goa's Roman Catholic Portuguese ancestry, combined with cultural influences,

makes for a strong conservative tradition. Europeans sunbathing in modest (by our standards) swimwear cause sufficient interest for Indians to come to Goa simply to look at them.

Phoebe Collins, producer of BBC Radio 1's documentary programme *World Party*, to be broadcast on Sunday at 7pm, said her research suggested the drugs problem was not simply Western tourists corrupting local values and being punished accordingly.

"Many tourists are mistrustful of the police," she said. "Visitors all know what baksheesh means — a bribe, and many people believe police bust cannabis users specifically to get baksheesh, which can be thousands of pounds."

Inspector General Brar admitted that three policemen had recently been suspended for extorting money from two British tourists. "But to brand it as widespread is not correct," he said.



No one profits from a BA strike

Over the past few years we have become used to strikes hitting Air France and other state-owned airlines. But — apart from some sabre-rattling by pilots last year — British Airways has lived through a period of comparative industrial calm.

Because of this, its customers have remained loyal, despite fierce competition from low-cost airlines and rival "flag carriers". Profits and staff numbers have grown, enabling all 57,000 employees this year to share a £94 million bonus — 3.3 weeks' pay or a minimum of £1,100 each.

But this week a headline in *The Times* read "BA faces prospect of summer strikes". The story outlined how two groups of workers — all members of, or affiliated to, the Transport and General Workers Union — are being balloted on industrial action.

If either group votes in favour, by mid-July British Airways flights will either be grounded or severely disrupted.

The argument centres on BA's search for bigger cost savings. It wants to negotiate with each section separately, wants agreement for changes to working practices and even two-year pay freezes. Only by doing so, BA argues, will it continue making such profits.

Another idea was that the airline should no longer do its own catering. "We must invest in aircraft — not in kitchens," BA said. Nearly every other airline in the world had specialist catering firms to produce their in-flight food and Heathrow was the only airport in the world where BA still did its own catering, it said.

So it was decided to sell off the whole operation to a private company. This "kick in the teeth" proved too much for the T&G, whose members had "made many sacrifices to ensure the profitability of the business". A

ballot involving all 9,000 ground staff — not just caterers — is now being held.

The other dispute involves cabin crew, who have long argued for increases in basic pay so that they get better pensions and bigger profit-sharing bonuses.

This year BA agreed as part of a complex deal which gave some cabin crew up to 24 per cent more money and guaranteed that should anyone be worse off through loss of allowances, it would make up the difference. One breakaway union — Cabin Crew 89 — agreed immediately. The T&G's affiliate, BASSA, did not and called a

ballot. BA relies on its cabin crew to project its image to the world. Yet while this row goes on, morale has plummeted and the "trolley dolly" smiles are wearing thin. BA vows to keep flying whatever happens, has closed the union office at Heathrow, hints at further action against those who strike and threatens to tear up agreements already reached should there be a strike.

Union officials are meanwhile urging members to "stand up to the playground bully" and whipping up fears that their pay will be cut when it won't. Officials have described BA as acting like "a 19th-century mill owner". The smaller union Cabin Crew 89 has been described as having anything from 600 to 1,500 members when it actually has 2,967 and is expanding at the rate of 20 a week.

Normally such squabbles have little impact on real people. But this summer millions all over the world expect to fly with BA. It would be outrageous if this quarrel were allowed to disrupt so many travel plans, and it would harm the image of new Britain in the 85 countries BA serves. The disputes can and must be resolved.

Airline expands Majorca service

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

DEMAND for a new cut-price scheduled air service to Majorca is so great that the airline providing it is to increase the number of flights to three a week in November and plans further expansion next year.

Hundreds of villa and apartment owners and tenants who live in Britain and rely heavily on scheduled airlines to reach their properties were shocked when Iberia suddenly stopped all its flights to Palma at the end of March.

British Airways no longer operates a regular scheduled service to Majorca, so independent travellers not on a package deal had to use either British Midland from Heathrow or last-minute seats on charter flights. With demand far exceeding supply, many were unable to get a seat and prices soared.

However, Futura Direct, a small Majorca-based airline which is 85 per cent owned by the Irish carrier Aer Lingus, obtained a licence to operate on the route from the beginning of this month. The service was flooded with bookings and all 150 economy and 14 business-class seats have been taken on every flight from Gatwick.

Efforts to obtain additional take-off and landing slots floundered because Gatwick is already full at peak times. The earliest the airline can obtain a convenient slot is from November 2 and indications are that this will not be enough.

The airline has applied to increase the frequency from next April and more flights will be added if possible.

Futura operates a fleet of Boeing 737-400 and offers fares from £99 for the winter. The one-month economy super apex is at £129 return, with business-class seats costing £260 return. These prices are about 20 per cent lower than those charged by rivals.

Cycling, watersports, angling & beaches?



TRAVEL ON SATURDAY

Gap Year special: how to make the most of the year after school
Day trip to Venice — by Eurostar
Eric Jacobs in Honduras
Therese Gordon-Duffy on Verona

ATHLETICS

Showdown
has more
passion
than centsBy DAVID POWELL
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

FOR those who like their athletics to be more than skin deep, the 5,000 metres in the Golden Gala grand prix in Rome tonight should be the parts that the much-hyped events in Hengelo, Holland, and Toronto last weekend failed to reach. How ironic it would be if the first world record-breaking duel of the season came free of million-dollar incentives and promotional fanfare.

Daniel Komen against Salah Hissou, over 12½ laps is, in one respect, a race in the mould of those held between Donovan Bailey and Michael Johnson, in Toronto, and Haile Gebrselassie and Noureddine Morceli, in Hengelo. They meet over a neutral distance: Komen, from Kenya, is the 3,000 metres world record holder, Hissou, from Morocco, is the 10,000 metres world record-holder.

However, less than \$200,000 awaits the winner in appearance and bonus payments, even if he breaks the world record, and there will be an element of team racing between the Kenyans and Moroccans.

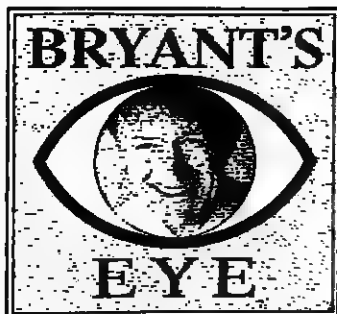
There is no inveterate rivalry in athletics like that between these two countries, vividly highlighted by the 1992 Olympic 10,000 metres, when Khalid Skah, from Morocco, was disqualified from the gold medal then, while Kenya protested, reinstated.

Aziz Daouda, Hissou's manager, said: "We are going to do great things at the Golden Gala." For Hissou, who ran a personal best 12min 50.80sec last year, that can only mean taking Gebrselassie's world record of 12min 44.39sec. Kim McDonald, Komen's manager, said the Kenyan, who came within a second of the record in Zurich last year, would "come close or break the world record".

Sebastian Coe's 800 metres world record must be vulnerable every time Wilson Kipketer runs the distance, which he does tonight. British interest centres on Linford Christie, in the 100 metres, and Sally Gunnell, in the 400 metres hurdles.

Century-old boxing film delivers knockout blow to modern-day directors

Sporting life leaves Hollywood reeling



In sport, the camera can be the cruellest critic. Just ask the promoters of the so-called head-to-head showdown between Donovan Bailey and Michael Johnson last weekend.

They know that all the clever camera angles in the world, all the fancy hype and editing, cannot fake the drama of a genuine contest.

Never is this more evident than when the Hollywood film makers get to work on sport. They can hire the best directors, actors and writers, but when it comes to sport on the screen, fiction will always take a beating from the real thing.

Since the earliest days of the cinema, the real thing has scored heavily over embarrassing fictionalized versions of sport, as will be demonstrated at the National Film Theatre next week.

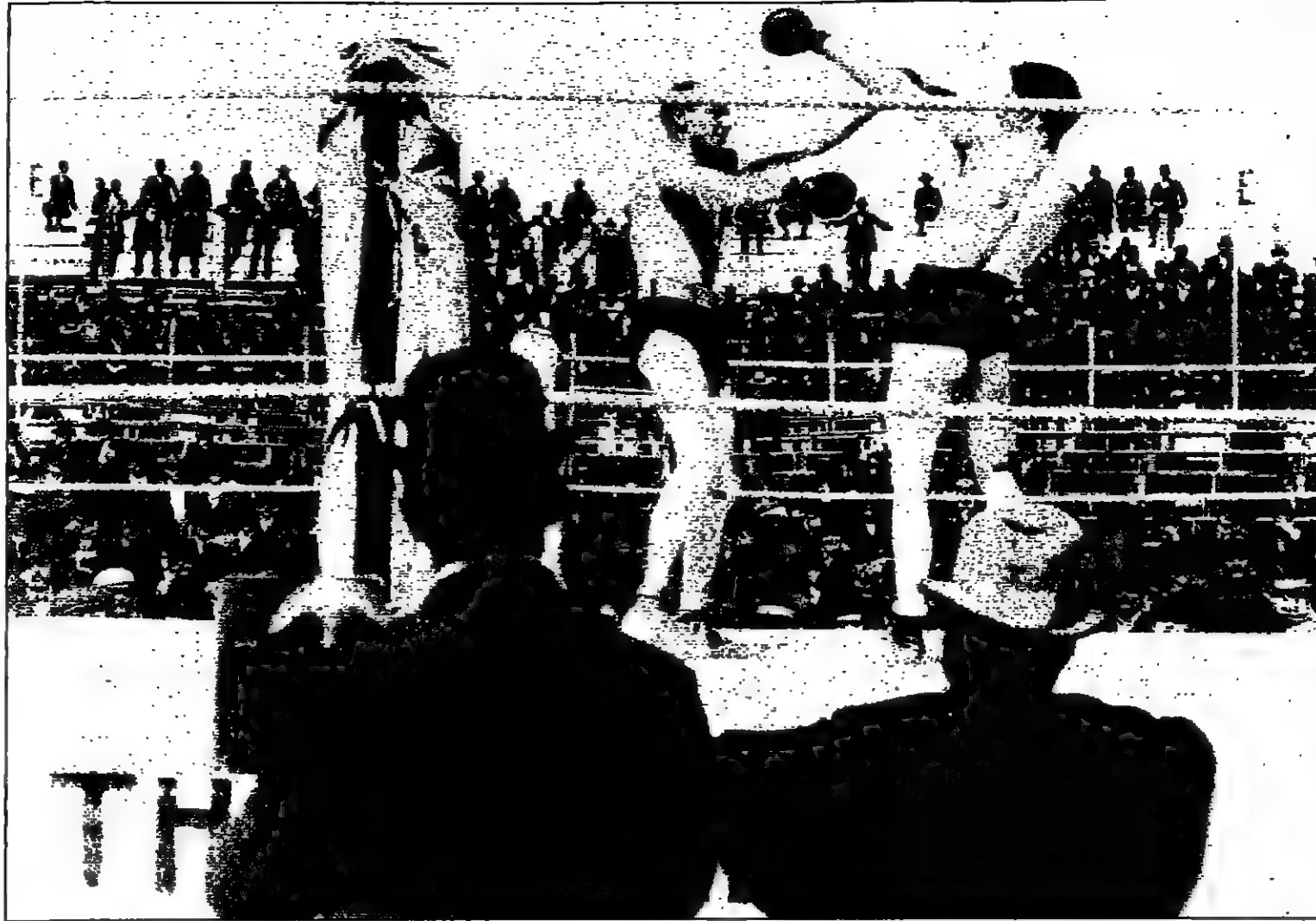
The theatre is celebrating 100 years of boxing films and the highlight of the programme is a flickering, century-old record of the first title bout recorded on film—the battle for the heavyweight championship of the world between the American, "Gentleman" Jim Corbett, and the Cornishman, Bob Fitzsimmons.

They met on March 17, 1897, in Carson City, Nevada, and Corbett, the champion, lost his title to a controversial solar plexus punch in the fourteenth round.

What makes this documentary score so heavily over films such as *Rocky* is the seductive detail and the authenticity of the action. Corbett was, at 30, an elegant boxer who sported a bouffant hairstyle and fancied himself as an actor. He was a snappy dresser and the film shows him wearing a pair of shorts cut alarmingly high. Fitzsimmons, at 34, was something of a contrast. He had amazing upper-body development as a result of his work as a blacksmith but, at 156lbs, his legs were very skinny. He was described vividly as a fighting machine on stilts.

Before the contest, Sheriff Bat Masterson, the famous Western marshal, and his deputies collected more than 400 guns from customers at the gates. Another sheriff, Wyatt Earp, stood guard in Corbett's corner with a loaded six-gun.

"After the fight was finished," one



Brief encounter: Corbett, right, sporting high-cut shorts, fends off an assault by Fitzsimmons during their encounter in Carson City

'It is the toe-curling lack of reality
that upsets most sports lovers'

were made with actors playing Corbett and Fitzsimmons.

These fooled nobody and were so ridiculous that they had the audiences rolling with laughter—an experience that anyone who has sat through a fictionalised sporting melodrama in the cinema will share.

For there is nothing as awful in a sporting feature film as those unforgettable moments when the director utterly fails to capture the authenticity of a contest.

Who can forget the ludicrous goalkeeping of Sylvester Stallone in *Escape to Victory*? In this appalling prisoner of war story, the Allies field a football team that includes Stallone and Michael Caine alongside Pelé and Bobby Moore.

When he gets into shorts, Stallone has a lot to answer for. You will find him in yet more unconvincing sporting action in the *Rocky* films, where he always fails to take the final count, despite ever-increasing evidence of brain damage.

It is the toe-curling lack of reality that upsets most sports lovers when they watch fictionalised contests. I train sometimes with a veteran runner whose finest cinematic moment was as an extra in a quaint 1970 film, *The Games*. The plot tells of four marathon runners preparing for the Rome Olympics, and if you allow this one-time extra to draw breath on a run he will tell you how, despite endless takes, he and other athletes repeatedly failed to run

slowly enough to make Charles Aznavour look like Emile Zatopek.

Significantly, in recent times, the only sport feature films that have credibility are those such as *Hoop Dreams* and *When We Were Kings*, which use documentary footage.

There are no such problems for the National Film Theatre. As well as the Corbett v Fitzsimmons bout, they are showing the first black heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson, beating Jim Jeffries in 1910, Jack Dempsey against Georges Carpentier in 1921 and the rematch between Joe Louis and Max Baer in 1938.

So forget the cinema gang of actors who can't play and players who can't act. When it comes to a sporting film, the real thing will beat the fiction every time—even if it is silent, black and white, flickering and 100 years old.

Boxing of the Century will be screened at the NFT (0171 928 3232) on Tuesday, June 10 (6.30pm).

BOXING

Calzaghe's
march
unlikely to
be haltedBy SRIKUMAR SEN
BOXING CORRESPONDENT

JOE CALZAGHE, the unbeaten Welsh super-middleweight, continues on his march towards a world title in the autumn at Whitechapel, Bristol, tonight. He meets Luciano Torres, from Brazil.

Since only two of Calzaghe's opponents have managed to last more than five rounds—16 of them falling in one, six in two—it is most unlikely that Torres will stay around too long.

As a result of his successes, Calzaghe is convinced he is the best super-middleweight in the world and boxing fans will be watching to see how efficiently he dispatches the Brazilian.

Torres is not a great threat as he does not carry a heavy enough punch to test the Welshman seriously, nor is he sufficiently skilled to cause too many problems.

Now 31, Torres has had 46 contests, of which he has lost two. He was stopped in one round by Yoriboy Campas, the Mexican welterweight but, despite that setback five years ago, Torres was highly regarded and was the World Boxing Association's (WBA) No 1 challenger last year.

Frank Warren signed him but he disappointed in his last appearance in October, after which somebody asked Warren if he was still on his books. Warren replied: "He is not even in my library."

It is unlikely that Torres will do anything this time to make Warren change his view about his boxing. Calzaghe should provide a quick finish and help ticket sales for the world title bout.

Joe Bugner, 47, retained his Pan Asian Boxing Association heavyweight title on the Gold Coast, Australia, on Tuesday night with a seventh-round knockout of Waisiki Ligaloa, the Fijian champion. The former British Commonwealth and European champion stopped Ligaloa midway through the seventh round with a right to the jaw that sent his opponent sprawling. Bugner, ranked eleventh by the WBA, twice went the distance with Muhammad Ali in Ali's prime.

THE TIMES

THE GREAT FORD GIVE-AWAY.

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http://www.the-times.co.uk

CHANGING TIMES

SAILING: MILES PASS SLOWLY IN ATLANTIC FOR CREW OF CONCERT

Tension starts to surface after
five lazy weeks in paradise

OF ALL the legs in the BT Global Challenge, I always thought that this one—the fifth and penultimate stage from Cape Town to Boston—was potentially the most enjoyable. After the hard work and trauma of the Southern Ocean, a five-week trip up the Atlantic, with warm sunshine and the chance to relax, seemed the perfect sequel. But it has turned into something of an anticlimax.

Not for one moment do I wish I was back in the wilds of the Southern Ocean, but we don't have enough to do now and, in a masochistic sort of way, I think we all miss the adrenalin rush that was a key part of the tougher stages of the race.

Stress levels on this leg have been higher in the last couple of weeks than at any time in the past nine months. This could be put down to the tea-bag crisis. We overindulged during the first two weeks and are now left with just six tea bags per day between 14 people. A better explanation is that we are not much good at doing nothing. After surviving some of the worst seas in the world, five weeks in "paradise" is just too easy.

The extra time is filled with reading and there is a thriving black market in the limited supply of books on board. Sarah, the ship's medic, has tried and failed miserably to



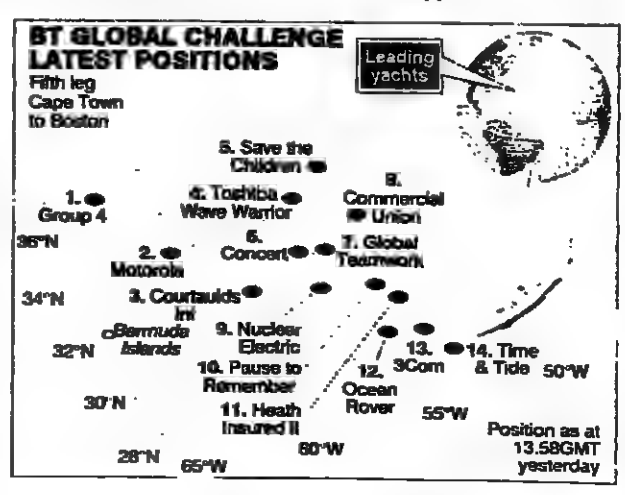
Lucy Duncan, with time to kill, yearns for more challenging waters and a tea party in Boston

dye her hair blonde with bleach and there have been loads of competitions invented by two crew members who have joined just for this leg.

Despite all this, the tensions created by living in a confined space for long periods with 13 other people have come nearer the surface than at any time in the race. By our own standards, we are doing badly on this leg, which is certainly adding to the stresses.

Crossing the Doldrums was

particularly unpleasant—grey, wet and windless for 24 hours and we came out the other end to find Group 4 well out of sight. Looking at the position reports became quite an ordeal. We watched Mike Golding and his crew extend their lead as we leaked miles in ones or twos every six hours. Usually, there is no need to even look at the computer to find out, you can see it instantly on the faces of the skipper and crew.



Golding closes in on fourth-leg victory

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

WITH stronger winds favouring the yachts at the head of the fleet, Mike Golding's Group 4 yesterday extended her lead over Mark Lodge, on *Motorola*, by a further 36 miles, as the leaders in the BT Global Challenge begin their final run into Boston.

Golding, who is bidding for a fourth stage win out of five, has established an insurmountable lead over Lodge, in second place, with a margin in terms of distance to the finish of around 165 miles. Yesterday Group 4 had just 600 miles still to sail and was expected to reach Boston by Saturday morning.

With *Motorola* about 142 miles ahead

of *Courtauld's International* in third place, the top two positions for the leg seem settled. However, Boris Webber, on *Courtauld's*, has his work cut out to hold his placing—easily his best on a long leg—with Simon Walker, on *Toshiba Wave Warrior*, and Andy Hindley, on *Save The Children*, who are scrapping for second and third places overall, close on his heels.

Marcus Hutchinson, of Great Britain, and Michel Desjoyeaux, of France, are still leading the double-handed Tour of Brittany, after finishing fifth yesterday in the offshore race overnight from Ferros Guirec to Douarnenez.

The race, which was characterised by light airs and very strong tides, was won by the Vendée Globe survivor, Thierry

Dubois, sailing with Christophe Godard. One casualty was the former single-handed transatlantic winner, Philippe Poupon, on *Fleury Michon*, who put his 31ft Beneteau-Figaro on the rocks shortly after the start, but managed to recover to finish sixteenth. Damien Foxall, of Ireland, on *DHL*, is eleventh overall with five races to come.

In the Corel Mumm 36 world championships at Punta Ala, Italy, the key offshore race, which commands more points than any other in the series, got under way in light airs. John Merricks, of Great Britain, on *Bradamanie*, who was second overall going into the race, made a good start and was clocked in third position with about two thirds of the race to sail.

GOLF: TWO BRITISH WALKER CUP PLAYERS BEATEN IN SECOND ROUND OF AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP AT SANDWICH

Howard unfazed by sideways bounce

By JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

WHEN you are just about the best amateur in Great Britain, you can be blasé about the Walker Cup. When your place in the team against the United States in August is virtually assured, then you can say what you like about the event. When you are 44, playing the best golf of your career and have missed only one cut in four years of amateur golf, you are entitled to be relaxed about it.

So it was with Barclay Howard yesterday after he had defeated Paul Furber, of Finland, in the second round of the Amateur Championship at Royal St George's, on an overcast day thick with birdsong.

"I am a lot different about the Walker Cup to the way I was two years ago," Howard said after recovering from being three down after four holes to win 2 and 1. "I was so uptight then it was a joke. I

powerful hitter, chose an iron from the next tee. His first mistake was to hit his ball to the right of the fairway, from where he had a very difficult shot to the flag, which is well guarded by a bunker. His second mistake was to aim for the flag and end in that bunker. He would have been better off in Duncan's Hollow to the left of the green.

Philipson, meanwhile, had driven left, the better to open up the green. His ball was in thick rough but his spirits were buoyed by seeing where Rankin's ball ended. With some of the pressure lifted, he played a better shot than he probably would have done had Rankin's ball ended on the green.

Using a nine-iron, Philipson chased his ball out of the rough and saw it bound on to the putting surface. "It was a bit of a swipe," Philipson said modestly but swipe or not he got his par and Rankin did not.

On the 19th in the morning Philipson had despatched Webster by hitting a magnificent one-iron through the wind to within six feet. In the afternoon, though, the hole was halved after Philipson holed from 35 feet and then Rankin followed him in from 15 feet.

The stroke that won Philipson his second extra-time victory of the day was his second on the 20th. Having pitched on the green, it rolled 15 feet to the right as if drawn by a string until it stopped one foot from the flag. Rankin could only concede.

Overall, Rankin may have played better and certainly he was unlucky on the 20th. "Graham would beat me eight times out of ten," Philipson said. "To be honest, he was not at his best today." You would have thought, however, that a Walker Cup player would not have made two such mistakes in quick succession.

Rankin was not the only member of the 1995 team to be defeated. Jody Fanagan, three up with three to play against Steve Sheehan, the brother of Patty, of LPGA fame, lost at the 20th.



Matt Carver, of West Kent, the leading qualifier, plays towards the cooling towers from the 9th tee at Royal St George's yesterday

Montgomery predicts plane sailing

By MEL WEBB

COLIN MONTGOMERIE, who heads the cast list of the Compaq European Grand Prix, which starts today, arrived at Sleaford Hall, Northumbria, in bullish mood. Infuriating though he can be at times, he is never frightened to be publicly self-critical when things are going wrong, and is equally prepared to bang the drum when his form is on an upward spiral. He says he is feeling good this week — the rest had better watch out.

Montgomery, second in the Ryder Cup points list, will not be without a challenge. The involvement this year of Compaq has given this tournament a £650,000 shot in the arm, and the consequence is

that 12 of the leading 20 players in the Cup list are present, including Miguel Angel Martin, Costantino Rocca, Lee Westwood and Paul Broadhurst.

Montgomery goes into the tournament in gung-ho mood. Yes, he said, there had been a technical problem in his third-round 76 at the Volvo PGA Championship, when he was hitting everything to the right, sometimes wildly so. But he had fixed it and proved it by waiting to a 64 in the final round at Wentworth to push himself up to fifth place.

In the PGA European Tour Guide, the European No 1 lists do-it-yourself as one of his hobbies and that applies whether he is erecting shelves at his home in Surrey or placing a spirit level on his

swing when it goes skew-whiff. Montgomery split with Bill Ferguson, his long-time coach, last year and now tends his own technique. He fished the hammer and nails out of the mental toolbox marked "swing" after that calamitous 76 and found that something needed attention.

The technical explanation would be incomprehensible to anybody but an advanced student, but what it boiled down to was the fact that his backswing was in the wrong plane.

"I was getting too far outside the line, so I made myself get it back more inside," he said. Those who are already lagging behind should not be concerned: this was esoteric, almost mystical stuff. For all anybody knew, he might have

been speaking in Swahili. And there was more.

"Actually, it feels like I'm going back inside, but in fact it is going straight back," he added. His interlocutors were looking more baffled by the second, so they changed the subject.

Montgomery is choosing to prepare for the US Open at Congressional, in Maryland, next week, by playing here instead of competing in the Kemper Open.

"There is no set textbook rule for playing or resting the week before a major," he said. "At the moment I'm in playing mode."

Montgomery was due to have appeared in the Tournament Players' Championship of Europe last week, but opted to take the week off and play at

Sleaford Hall instead. "I'm very fortunate to be able to play where I want these days, and I'm very glad I came here," he said. "I haven't been in contention enough this year, but I intend to be this week."

Enough said. It is no secret that Montgomery regards the US Open as his best chance to win the major championship he so desperately wants. Two weeks ago his legendary straight game, so powerful a weapon on US Open courses with their tight fairways and penal rough, deserted him.

He is now picking his target and hitting it and that spells potential trouble for his rivals. If he maintains his present confident mood, he will be hard to beat this week — and next, for that matter.

FOOTBALL

French pair sign for Arsenal

By DAVID MADDOCK

THERE is a corner of north London that is fast becoming a little piece of home for Arsène Wenger. The Arsenal manager took his contingent of French players at Highbury yesterday to five, by signing the Monaco pair, Gilles Grimandi and Emmanuel Petit, for a combined fee of £5 million.

Both are defenders and both are 27. Petit is the more experienced after joining Monaco in 1985 and winning 15 caps when he played under Wenger, who was coach at the Monte Carlo club in the early 1990s. Grimandi did not make his debut for Monaco until 1990 and has won international honours only with the French military.

Wenger has also stepped up his interest in Marc Overmars, of Ajax, but he may lose David Platt if Platt agrees a move to Japan.

Juninho, the Brazilian international, is still unsure of his future. The player is becoming increasingly anxious over his club, Middlesbrough, failing to accept any offer so far from clubs interested in removing him from the Riverside Stadium.

Graeme Souness, who walked out of the job as Southampton manager a week ago, could make a swift return to football with Torino, of Italy. He entered talks with the Serie B club yesterday and is reported to have suggested to the Italian media that he is close to agreeing a deal.

Martin O'Neill, the Leicester City manager, took one step further to end speculation about a possible move elsewhere yesterday when he put his name to a three-year contract.

One transfer to be completed yesterday was the signing of Alf Inge Haaland by Leeds United. The Norway striker had reached the end of his contract with Nottingham Forest, and Leeds are hoping to sign him for free under the Bosman ruling. Forest, for their part, have completed the signing of Kevin Miller, the Watford goalkeeper.

Brazilian swerves into fast lane of football fame



FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON IN LYONS

LYONS, one of the venues for the World Cup finals next summer, has much to recommend it, with an abundance of museums, cinemas and theatres. On June 22, 1965, The Beatles set up residence at the Hotel Royal in the Place Bellecour; in June 1996, the British delegation chose the same luxury accommodation, standing between the Rhône and Saône rivers, while attending the G7 summit.

France's second city is similarly proud of its gastronomic expertise, Renaissance architecture and production of silk. It is also waiting, with great expectation, to host five matches in the 1998 World Cup, including one of the quarter-finals. Its preparations for a 32-country, multicultural experience of staggering proportions are gathering pace.

On June 3, 1997, however, Lyons entered the consciousness of a global audience of millions for another reason —

the Roberto Carlos free kick. From that moment on, in the sultry evening heat of the Rhône-Alpes, the Stade de Gerland will always be remembered as the venue for that goal.

Roberto Carlos's sublime first-half strike from 34.6 yards in the 1-1 draw between France and Brazil on Tuesday, the opening match of the four-nation Tournoi de France, produced a snake-like effect. As the ball spun off the outside of the Brazilian defender's left foot, powered to a peak of 85.3mph after his run-up of more than ten yards, it first swerved extravagantly around the defensive wall and away from goal.

Didier Deschamps, standing helplessly on the outside of the four-strong wall, glanced backwards to track its route. He, like his team-mates, probably expected it to continue on its wayward path and take out either an advertising hoarding, stray photographer or inattentive ballboy. It did not. Having passed Deschamps,



With Roberto Carlos airborne, left, the ball begins its bewitching journey past the French wall before, centre, arcing back towards the goal and, left, inside Barthez's post

it darted back in, elegantly, in a broad, sweeping arc. It nipped the left-hand post of Fabien Barthez, the France goalkeeper, and nestled in the net. Barthez, who had barely moved a muscle, stared in disbelief.

The Frenchman was less than charitable. "I positioned

the wall badly," he said. "Once the ball was hit, it was too late for me. I think the goal was my fault." On reflection, he added: "It's true, it was a superb shot. It was too fast. I thought it was going out."

Only after watching the replays, from the angle behind Roberto Carlos, could the goal

be fully appreciated. It got better with every viewing, such was its exquisite execution and entrancing flight. It was a thing of great beauty, an automatic entry into the sport's hall of fame.

Roberto Carlos da Silva, 24, the Real Madrid full back, is noted for his artistry and ferocity at set-pieces. "I once scored a goal like that against Roma," he said, recalling his days playing for Internazionale in Serie A. "But it was during open play, not a free kick. Of course, this is an important goal in my career."

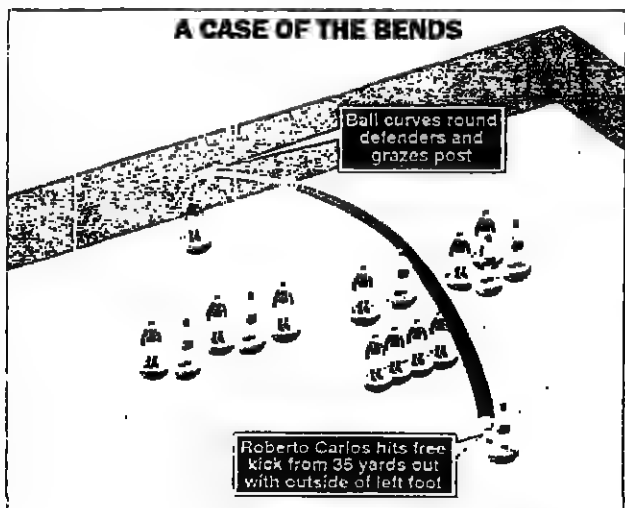
It was only his second in 31 international matches. England have the players to match such South American dynamism. David Beckham, the Manchester United mid-field player, scored a goal against Chelsea in February that was measured at 97.9mph. When David Hirst, the Sheffield Wednesday striker, hit the crossbar in the game against Arsenal in September, the ball was travelling at 114mph. His effort, though,

was from a distance of only 14.8 yards.

Yet apart from Beckham, and perhaps Paul Gascoigne in his prime, few British performers can persuade a ball to twist, turn and swirl in mid-air, at pace, before crossing the goal line. It is a mostly Latin trait, borne of natural flair rather than constant coaching.

As Roberto Carlos wheeled away to celebrate his marvellous expression of the beautiful game, and the mostly French supporters began to realise what they had witnessed, he ran towards the opposite end of the Stade de Gerland. Masking the temporary building site, which will disappear by the time of the World Cup, finals arrive, was a giant mural depicting the faces of 32 of the world's most distinguished players.

Didi, Garrincha, Pelé, Zico and Rivelino, the Brazilian immortals, looked down on Roberto Carlos. On June 3, 1997, in Lyons, perhaps he earned the right to join them.



Spin doctor goes through motions

Nick Nuttall on how science played a significant part in a ploy from Brazil

Roberto Carlos is unlikely to have studied Sir Isaac Newton, but his remarkable goal in Lyons owed much to the British physicist's third of law of motion. Dr Brian Delf, a fellow of the Institute of Physics and a confirmed sports fan, says the Brazilian set up a spin that was so finely tuned that the air on the right-hand side of the ball was pushing it back with increasing force, causing it to swing in between the posts.

"Newton's third law says if you push something it pushes you back. You can see this if you push someone on ice skates or in space," the scientist said.

Dr Delf, who works at the Technique centre in Cardiff, explained that when a ball is fired straight through the air, the air simply slows it down. "Like Shearer's goal against Poland," he said.

"With the Carlos goal, he hit it on the right-hand side and it was sent spinning anticlockwise. The air on the right-hand side of the ball is moving in the same direction as the ball is travelling, while the air on the left-hand side is moving in the opposite direction.

"Back to Newton's third law. The ball is pushing the

air to the right. This means the air is pushing the ball to the left and so it curves that way," he said.

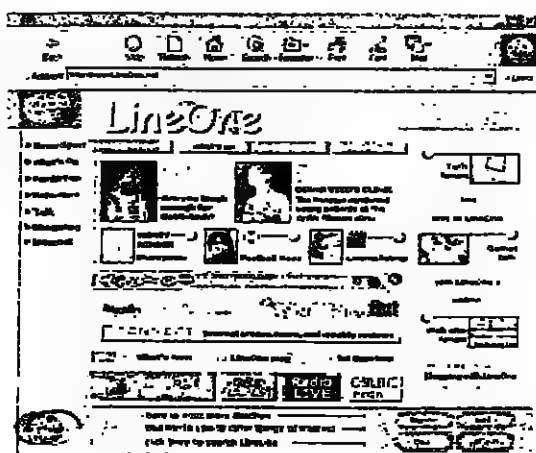
The effect is enhanced on the left-hand side where, because of the difference in spin, the slower spin exerts a drag or pull to the left. For the audience watching the match on television, the ball seemed to curve at the last minute, but Dr Delf described this as "being in the eye of the beholder".

In reality, the ball was curving all the time but, because of the large distance from goal, the curve became increasingly sharp towards the end so that it appeared to whip in.

"If you had looked from above you would have seen a parabolic curve," Dr Delf said. The scientist said that explaining the physics was one thing, but understanding how Carlos scored is another.

"If you and I were playing around on a training pitch we might be able to get it to bend as much. But your granny would be able to pick it up before it got to the goal," he said.

"He managed to balance the speed of the ball and the amount of spin so it reached the goal going very fast."



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TENNIS: RAFTER BECOMES FIRST AUSTRALIAN TO REACH LAST FOUR IN 20 YEARS

Artistry of Arazzi is eclipsed by Bruguera

FROM ROB HUGHES IN PARIS

THE French gave us deuce, but on their own courts always use the word *egalite*. There was little or nothing overhanded about the tennis on Centre Court yesterday, or the day before. Where Wednesday had given us six contests and great drama, yesterday provided a safe and relatively easy passage into the men's semi-finals for Pat Rafter, the first Australian to reach this stage in 20 years, and for Sergi Bruguera, the resurgent Spaniard, who is seeking to reclaim the French Open crown that he wore in 1994 and 1995.

Rafter, using the sultry weather and the relative quickness of the red clay this season, dispatched a less experienced Spanish contender, Gato Blanco, 6-3, 7-6, 6-3. . . and he employed classic, athletic, serve-and-volley Aussie tactics to do so.

Bruguera, of course, outlasted his man. For just over an hour, the beguiling though ultimately brittle Moroccan, Hicham Arazzi, toyed with the emotions of the 16,000 crowd, brought Bruguera to the net, and either lobbed him or passed him with, at times, a beautifully brutal backhand.

Bruguera, a baseliner personified, probed and waited, upped the precision and the ratio of his groundstrokes and, knowing that Arazzi runs out of stamina rather quicker than he runs out of improvisation, the Spaniard prevailed 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2, in 2½ hours.

So, on Friday, it will be a semi-final between Rafter, persevering with rushing the net, against Bruguera, sometimes brooding, always patient, attempting to pick him off from the back of the court. In the other men's semi-final there is the relaxed, engaging new Brazilian, Gustavo Kuerten, against Filip Dewulf, who is not only

unranked, but came through the qualifying stages.

Unless Bruguera, the No 16 seed and even then only rated at all because of injuries to others, is the champion again, we shall see only the third non-seed win this tournament, following Marcel Bernard, in 1946, and Mats Wilander, in 1982.

Rafter, from Queensland, has recaptured the form that two years ago saw him compared with Pat Cash. A shoulder injury, back pain, the wrist giving way, it all seemed to accumulate as he went backwards to No 62 on the dreaded tennis computer. He is not there now, he will end this tournament in the top 20. His blood is rushing forward, in the same way that he plays his tennis.

Rafter simply overwhelmed Blanco. Rafter's service was too strong, and a solitary break enabled the Australian to take the first set. After that it was a struggle for Blanco to hold his own service games, much less to contain Rafter's, although with some pluck he did occasionally accurately lob the Australian.

Nevertheless, Blanco was clinging to hope rather as his shirt was clinging to his back; and French onlookers were beginning to observe that the last man to serve and volley through to the semi-finals had been Yannick Noah, who can be seen partying and singing on the stage around the French capital these nights.

So, an untroubled, somewhat undistinguished passage for Rafter. His improving game may eventually approach that of Cash, but he is not the player that Tony Roche was (and Roche is a mentor to Rafter), much less a performer in the mould of Rod Laver and Ken Rosewall, who last shared the French Open final, with Laver winning, in 1969.



Rafter is exultant after completing his victory. Photograph: Philippe Wojazer

Rafter did rise to the question afterwards of how much clay-court experience he has. "We have a surface at home called Antbed," he said. "The big, tall ants, they make these mounds. They get it and they crush it and they make the courts out of it. . . that's about the only close thing we have back in Queensland." Was he serious? "We played on that, and hard courts and a bit of grass."

There is no question about the surfaces on which

Bruguera learnt his game in Barcelona. His opponent yesterday, Arazzi, was also raised on European clay for, although born in Casablanca, he has lived in France from the age of two.

Arazzi brought artistry back to the court for a set and a half yesterday. He glides with wonderful quickness, uses the racket with the wristy subtlety of a badminton player. He invents shots, invents the game and, with a crowd remarkably well populated by Moroccan, the culture of Arabia was briefly brought to Centre Court.

To be honest, the excitement and anticipation of Arazzi's own people was shared by many neutrals: not that we wish any ill to Bruguera, but simply because we crave to be lifted from our seats by an entertainer.

For the first set, won 6-4 in 39 minutes by Arazzi, we had our fill. Refusing to be intimidated by the Spaniard's accurate length or his surly questioning of calls, Arazzi did to Bruguera what he had so handsomely done to the Chilean, Marcelo Rios, in the quarter-final: he bamboozled him. But Bruguera knows more about the game than any man left in the tournament. He chipped away with relentless accuracy, he broke Arazzi in the second and eighth games, and he imposed himself, 6-3, in the second set.

Egalite, but from there on, Arazzi began to weaken, and how sweet the groans of effort must sound to a stayer like Bruguera.

Bruguera saw off his opponent with scarcely any chance. Today, with rain forecast, the ladies are on court — first Martina Hingis versus Monica Seles, followed by Iva Majoli, the Croatian, against Amanda Coetzer, the South African. The first ladies' semi-final would, in an equal world, be the final this year.

RESULTS FROM PARIS

Men

Singles

Quarter-finals
P Rafter (Aus) bt G Blanco (Sp) 6-3, 7-6, 6-3

S Bruguera (Sp) bt H Arazzi (Mor) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2

Doubles

Quarter-finals
Y Kafelnikov (Rus) and D Vacek (Cz) bt K Brannoch and J Kriess (Ger) 4-6, 7-6, 6-3

T Woodhouse and M Woodhouse (Aus) bt R Leach and J Stark (US) 6-2, 7-6

L Arvidsson and D Orsanic (Arg) bt T Garbaini and F Rolig (Sp) 4-6, 6-4, 6-4

J Eltingh and P Hearn (Hol) bt J Eagle and A Florent (Aus) 6-7, 6-4, 6-2

Women

Singles

Quarter-finals
M Hingis (Swt) bt A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) 6-3, 6-2

M Hingis (Swt) bt A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) 6-3, 6-2

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M Hingis (Swt) bt A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) 6-3, 6-2

Jovial sidekick ready to lead the parade

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE



Elliott: ambitious

WHIPPING boys to world domination was neither the fanciful or fantastic notion apparent when Matthew Elliott first rolled up at Odsal from Sydney St George. From millionaire's row to cardboard city, the rebuilding work alone looked a daunting prospect.

Two years on, Bradford Bulls, runaway leaders of the Super League, have become the great white hopes for European rugby league on the global stage offered by the world club championship.

Penrith, first up for the Odsal experience next Monday night, are in for a culture shock. "No side can prepare themselves for that carnival atmosphere. It'll surprise the Australians, just as it's surprised a few British teams," Elliott said. "It's amazed me, too. There were nights shortly after I arrived when we'd be getting bashed, there were less than 5,000 in and the fog meant you couldn't see the other side of the pitch."

Bradford are confident of crowds in excess of 20,000 and to gross a total £600,000 for the Penrith game and those against Auckland and Cronulla. With an average 15,000 attendance this season, their boast about being the best supported rugby club in Europe — of either code — is not an idle one. In the shadow

of Brian Smith, the Australian coach, who specialises in turning round unfashionable causes, Elliott was the loyal assistant and jovial sidekick, who has earned respect this season for completing the transformation.

At St George, he is remembered as the committed second-row forward whose career was curtailed at its height by injury. He was appointed by Smith to the coaching staff and dispatched to Bradford as his advance



Elliott: ambitious

Visa invests in world club championship

THE eleventh-hour search for a sponsor for the world club championship ended just as the European launch began yesterday at Huddersfield, with a hurried announcement that Visa, the credit company, has put in a substantial investment to help to offset estimated £2 million operational costs. Total prize-money, including £500,000 to the winners, exceeds £1.1 million.

St Helens, who ended a miserable run of defeats away to Halifax last Sunday, despite missing ten first-team players, will be closer to full strength for the opening match against Auckland Warriors at Knowles Road tomorrow. Frank Endacott, the Auckland coach, said: "I understand they are going through a bad patch, so I'm pleased to be getting them at the right time."

Although bottom of the Australasian Super League,

Auckland bristle with talented individuals and will select from a squad of 19. Matthew Ridge, the full back and New Zealand team captain, who enjoyed a 30 series white-wash of Great Britain last year, said that the world club championship was now the club's priority after only three league wins.

Andrew Edginghouse, the Cronulla and Australia centre, who spent the early part of his career at Leeds, said: "I don't think there's going to be a lot in the games."

Wigan have warned Australian Rugby League (ARL) clubs to stay away from Jason Robinson during their first phase of matches in Australia. Robinson is ready to move to the ARL next month, but Eric Hughes, the Wigan coach, remains hopeful that a deal can be done to keep the Great British wing at Central Park.

scout. When Smith moved to Parramatta last year, Elliott, 32, was the natural successor and is now very much his own man. Intelligent and ambitious, along with Shaun McRae (St Helens), Tony Currie (London) and Stuart Raper (Castleford), he is in the vanguard of young, sharp-minded Australians now invigorating the English game.

Elliott said: "It was a case of moving from the penthouse down to the basement at Bradford, but I was never downhearted. What has happened here didn't occur by accident. A lot was down to Brian's astute business sense."

The sale of Paul Neville to St Helens was the catalyst. We got seven quality players for one. The players who were here couldn't match the ambition we're looking for now are young up-and-comers."

Along with Mick Potter and Brian Noble, his assistant coaches, Elliott has been poring over video footage of Penrith this week. He is convinced that standards in Australia have dipped, as a consequence of separate Super League and Australian Rugby League competitions, while standards here have appreciably increased. Restored to full fitness, Elliott is confident that Bradford can not only do well, but win the competition and its £500,000 prize.

"It's difficult to say how the English sides will do overall, because there's simply been no bench mark in recent times. But I've noticed big improvements, while going from 14 to 22 teams in Australia in a short time has brought a big dilution of talent," he said. "There's still an attitude in Australia that they have superior quality players. That's not my attitude. Some of the teams there are taking this venture seriously. Not all of them, though."

"With Karl Fairbank, who used to be at Bradford, we recently picked a Great Britain side that would not just be competitive against Australia. It would win. With our best side available, we've a very good chance. These next three weeks will take our performance to a new level, allow us to pit our skills and expertise against reputedly the best teams in the world, identify our strengths and pinpoint areas to work on. By then, hopefully, one or two more people might have heard of Bradford."

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

When you have two key cards to knock out in a No-Trump contract, it can be right to hold up with two stoppers in the suit that the defence attacks. This is an example, from an American charity event. Most of the field reached Three No-Trumps on a heart lead, and had to decide the best way forward.

Dealer East	Love all	Match-pointed pairs
<p>♠ 10 9 8 4 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ A 6 5 2 ♣ K 6</p>	<p>♠ K 6 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ Q J 9 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A 9 7 5 2 ♥ J 7 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ 10 8 3</p>

S	W	N	E
18	Pass	2C	Pass
20	Pass	2H	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Contract: Three No-Trumps by South. Lead: Ten of hearts.

This is the classic position for a hold-up. If hearts splits 4-3, it is irrelevant whether you win the first or second round, but, as the cards lie, look what happens if you take the first heart and drive out the ace of spades (if you lead the king of clubs, West will duck). When East takes the ace of spades and returns the jack of hearts, West will overtake and can clear the suit while retaining the ace of clubs as an entry. When spades fall to drive, you have only eight tricks.

However, if you duck the first heart and win the second in hand, East will have no hearts left when you drive out

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Madrid results

The elite tournament in Madrid finished in a tie for first prize between Veselin Topalov, the Bulgarian grandmaster, and Alexei Shirov, the Spanish (formerly Latvian) grandmaster. Topalov, led from the start, but a final split by Shirov allowed him to tie on 6½/9. A play-off match of three games resulted in three drawn games, therefore Topalov was declared winner on tie-break, since he had triumphed against Shirov in their individual game in the tournament.

In spite of this, Shirov's attractive and risky style made him a favourite with chess enthusiasts. This game, against Valery Salov, is typical of Shirov's stormy style.

White: Alexei Shirov
Black: Valery Salov
Madrid, May 1997

Scandinavian Defence

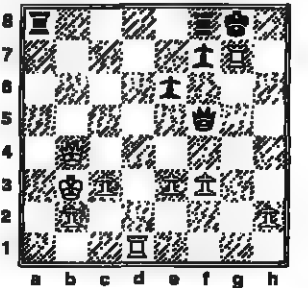
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 e4	d5								
2 exd5	c5								
3 Nc3	Qa5								
4 d4	Nf6								
5 Nf3	c6								
6 Bc4	Bf5								
7 Bg2	e6								
8 Nd5	Qd6								
9 Ne6+	Ox6								
10 Qe2	Bd7								
11 d5	Bx3								
12 g3	cxd5								
13 Bxd5	Nd7								
14 0-0-0	Bd3								
15 c3	0-0								
16 Be4	Be7								

In the above table, 1 represents a win, a draw and 0 a loss.

Winning Move

White to play. This position is from the game Weeramanny — Trabert, Hawaii, 1997. The white knight and e-pawn are an extremely strong unit and together tie up the black forces. It is, therefore, not surprising that White can score a quick win on the kingside. Can you see how?

Diagram of final position



After 29... Kxg7 30. Rg1+ forces mate or wins the black queen.

Madrid Final Crosstable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Topalov	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Shirov	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Salov	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Almasi	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Polgar	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Shabalov	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Shirov	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Salov	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Almasi	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Polgar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- MITTLE**
a. The middle
b. To harm
c. A lot
- LOA**
a. A Hawaiian greeting
b. A stave
c. A pilot
- MOZARAB**
a. A Christian
b. A breed of horse
c. A rook in chess
- LODEMAN**
a. An Austrian cloak
b. A stave
c. A pilot

Answers on page 50

Solution on page 50

FOR THE RECORD

BASEBALL

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Oakland 9 Detroit 6. Seattle 6 Toronto 3. Chicago White Sox 6 Cleveland 5. Baltimore 7 New York Yankees 5 (10 innings). Milwaukee 6 Boston 4. Minnesota 5 Texas 4. Kansas City 5 Anaheim 2.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Florida 1 (6 innings). Houston 4 Los Angeles 3 (10 innings). St Louis 18 Colorado 4 Pittsburgh 3. Chicago Cubs 1 Cincinnati 3 Philadelphia 2. San Diego 5 Atlanta 2. New York Mets 2 Montreal 1.

BOW

Beleaguered Australia captain prepares for his moment of truth in the Edgbaston Test

Taylor defiant as critics mount relentless assault

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

HE WOKE yesterday to find one more old colleague, one more imagined friend, joining the queue to destroy him. And, being the man he is, he picked himself up, pulled on the rusty green cap and fronted up to an inquisitive, even predatory world with dignity, charm and presence.

Whatever Mark Taylor may have become since English cricket last encountered him, he has not stopped being a good bloke. It is for this reason that he is receiving a sympathetic audience here amid his toils, and why the majority of the country would be happy to see him score 50 at Edgbaston today, so long as it came in an Australian total of 90 all out.

Taylor's batting form has collapsed. This much is certain. His captaincy is suffering and his standing in the Australia dressing-room is no longer unquestioned. It must sometimes seem that his world is falling apart, yet still there is no public sign of resentment, much less of the weeping retreat favoured by one of his predecessors.

Taylor, chin jutting characteristically, will stride out with Michael Atherton this morning, the captains in role reversal. England's man has never been more secure, while his Australian counterpart knows he is one bad match from the end of the line. Atherton, quite rightly, revels in any consequent disruption of the opposition plans, but he bristles at mockery of Taylor.

The cheap and tacky trick played by a tabloid newspaper last week, ambushing Taylor for a snatched photograph

with a three-foot wide bat, was beneath contempt. More pertinent are the growing calls for his dismissal from former captains of Australia, the latest being Bobby Simpson, who coached the team until a year ago.

Atherton has had his fill of gamekeepers turning poachers in this way. The cheque book speaks loudly to former players or officials with an axe to grind and the England captain has never cared for it. "I take no pleasure at all from media pressure on the Australian captain," he said. "I have been through it myself too often to enjoy someone else's suffering."

That Taylor has suffered is plain enough. Even this patient, affable, eminently approachable man has frayed around the edges in recent weeks as the scrutiny has intensified. "It's too much to say I've gone through hell, but it certainly hasn't been a pleasant time," he said.

"That's why I am looking forward to the cricket starting so that everyone has something else to talk about." In this, he might be mistaken, for the harshest of spotlights will not be diverted just yet. Whether he is brave or simply bloody-minded, Taylor will shut his ears to the malcontents and play today but, when it comes to his turn to bat, the drums will metaphorically roll. Fail, he will know, and the next flight home will seem an attractive option.

Taylor, however, has a message for those who hound him, particularly the former

players. "These people are damaging the prospects of the side by what they are saying. They must know that," he said. "Some of the things said and written about me have got very personal. That's just the way it is these days. You have to be thick-skinned as Australian captain."

Simpson worked closely with Taylor through the first year of his captaincy and it was hardly a timely intervention on behalf of an old workmate fallen on hard times to say: "By backing Taylor so strongly, the selectors have not faced up to reality. Now the team is in a real pickle."

Taylor has grown accustomed to such gibes, so much so that he hesitates to pick up a newspaper for fear of discovering another old ally turning against him. He can be saddened by it, though no longer surprised. His recent batting record — 153 runs in nine Test innings against West Indies and South Africa — is dire, and he has shown few signs on this tour of rediscovering touch and technique.

In his measured way he defended his position. "I am not the only selector on tour," he said. "It has been a committee decision that I should play in every game, while we try to arrive at our best Test side. Because of the short build-up, this inevitably means that others have suffered."

Specifically, Michael Slater and Ricky Ponting have been victims of the grand obsession to restore Taylor's form. Within an over-large party of 17, there has not been sufficient cricket for them to even make a claim for a Test place. Though he is indirectly to blame, Taylor expresses public sympathy for the pair. In private, he has gone into the situation in more detail and invited Slater and Ponting, in turn, to discussions in his hotel room in Derby over the weekend.

"I've spoken to them both individually," he said yesterday. "There is no problem. In all of this, the support of the other players has been paramount to me." So long as that continues to hold, Taylor will survive. If the cracks show in the next few days, he will no longer be able to resist the clamour of celebrity executioners.



Taylor in the nets at Edgbaston yesterday where he continued the struggle to regain his elusive form on the eve of the first match of the series

Pitch must hit exactly the right note

JOHN WOODCOCK



Test match commentary

In view of what has happened since, it seems hardly believable that a bare ten years ago I wrote of England's defeat at Sydney in the last Test match of their 1986-87 tour of Australia as being "in a good cause".

Mike Gatting's side had already reclaimed the Ashes and, after 14 successive Tests without a victory, Australia were so thankful to have broken the spell that in their dressing-room afterwards there were, quite literally, tears of relief.

When, at the time, I told the estimable and now venerable Gatting that Australia's need was much greater than England's, he would have none of it, and that was as it should have been. For two years, though, Australia had been through just as difficult a time as England have recently and come in for at least as much derision.

Today, at Edgbaston, they take the field as the most lauded Test side in the world, and the main reason for that is not that they have a host of very good batsmen, which they do, nor that their domestic cricket set-up is more advantageous than England's, which may or may not be so, nor that they are

obligatorily aggressive. It is because they have the climate and the playing conditions to have found, first in Craig McDermott and then in Shane Warne, bowlers to win them more than the occasional Test match and to give them the confidence that comes from doing so.

In winning the three one-day matches for the Texaco Trophy, England played their most convincing and encouraging cricket for a long time. They made their chances and took them, raising hopes thereby and greatly boosting morale. The hard work starts this morning, however. Test matches are not about stopping the opposition from scoring at more than five runs an over. They are about temperance and stamina and, ultimately, about bowling sides out, not once but twice; which brings us back to Warne and to McGrath and Gillespie and to the England attack.

It is tempting providence to say so, but Warne no longer looks to me to be quite the wonderful bowler that he was in England four years ago and in the first two Tests of England's last tour of Australia. No wrist spinner ever got as much work on the ball as he has in his time without his

Lindwall or Lillee and Thomson or Wasim and Waqar, McGrath and Gillespie are a fiery and fast-improving opening pair, and Warne still poses a real threat. England will be more dependent upon finding conditions to help them in the way they used to do before they were obliged to play their home Test matches on covered pitches. In the days, that is, when Tests in England were played in traditionally English conditions.

We could afford then to frown upon countries that doctored their pitches to suit their bowlers. Now England are in a moral dilemma, knowing that unless they try to do the same, albeit modestly, they are likely, much more often than not, to be a long time in the field. Australia's captain will know that in the ordinary way a covered English Test pitch and a standard England Test attack would provide him with the best chance he could possibly have of ending his present misery. His batting average in the two Test series that he has played here vouches for that: it is 63.

At their best, Gough, Caddick, Malcolm and Croft are all first-rate bowlers, as competent as many who have played successfully for England. If the Ashes are to be regained, though, they will need something less than entirely bland to bowl on and, with this in view, the help of the Test groundsmen is being canvassed more openly than has previously been so in this country. This, I think, is a pity, however expedient it may seem. It is also a policy that carries obvious risks by making matches easier to lose, against Australia anyway, as well as possibly easier to win.

The Edgbaston authorities are said to have been asked for a "slow, green, seaming surface", though reports suggest that they have not been seduced. Those at Lord's certainly will not be. As things stand this morning, with the Australians so concerned with, and unsettled by, the form of their captain, England would probably be best served by a really good pitch — one that distributes its favours evenly — the opposite, in fact, of a "slow, green, seaming surface".

But, come what may, what fun it is to have the old enemy here again and to see them just a little harassed, just a little less convinced of their precedence than when they arrived!

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Slater, left, and Ponting have been denied chances



Robinson soldiers on to keep Surrey waiting

By JACK BAILEY

THE OVAL (first day of four; Essex won toss): Surrey, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 347 runs behind Essex

SURREY may have been lacking a number of prime assets — Stewart, Thorpe, Adam Holoake and Mark Butcher on Test duty. Sagging on his way from Pakistan and, at the eleventh hour, Martin Bicknell with a recently ricked neck — but had it not been for a patient and far from chanceless 98 from Darren Robinson, they would have gobbled up Essex, themselves without Prichard and Hussain, well before tea.

As it was, Robinson made his highest score for Essex since 1995, falling two runs short of a century during a stay of 4½ hours. In the face of useful contributions from Stephen Peters and Robert Rollins, Surrey were kept in the field throughout a long, hot day. It was a long day, too. Frequent injections of Ian Salisbury's leg breaks brought little succour to those who chafe at the bit and wonder why 6½ hours is not long enough for 104 overs to be bowled.

Not that the Oval does not suit Surrey's array of seam bowlers. Pace and bounce in the pitch were most evident when Tudor, Lewis and Ben Holoake were propelling. Essex had lost four wickets for 103 by lunch and

had looked most uncomfortable while stumbling even to that humble foothill. By then, Robinson, labouring in the shadow of Gooch, had made an uncertain 24.

Sometimes persistence pays, however. Gooch accumulated four fours off Tudor before being bowled by a break-back when on the back foot. Grayson and Stuart Law were both caught at second slip; Irani was speared by a beautiful, in-standing yorker from Holoake; Robinson soldiered on.

Robinson found a useful partner in young Peters, playing in only his sixth championship match, but already the possessor of two first-class centuries. There is something of

Keith Fletcher in both looks and style when Peters is at the crease. Yesterday, he coped well with the quick stuff, though occasionally beaten outside the off stump, and he helped Robinson at 104 in 27 overs before he failed to read Salisbury's googly to which, he will remember, the cut is not the wisest stroke.

Meanwhile, Robinson, dropped on 37 by Jamie Knott and then at long leg off a sifter, when 75, ploughed steadily on, hitting the bad ball hard for most of his 15 fours and defending stolidly. There was little he could do, though, with the ball from Tudor which lifted and left him late. Knott took his first championship catch well and followed with another when

Danny Law succumbed just before tea.

By then, Surrey had lost their edge and their chance of cashing in. Rollins stroked his way to a half-century from 76 balls and the Essex tail, chiefly in the shape of Ashley Cowan, waggled ferociously. Ilt and Cowan added 51 for the ninth wicket as Cowan crashed 38 from 37 balls, including an enormous six off Salisbury.

There was just time for Surrey's innings to get under way. Further disappointment was avoided when Bicknell and Ratcliffe remained intact, but it was a day Surrey will remember most for the one that got away.

Lenham adds life to soulless day

By DEREK HODGSON

CHESTER-LE-STREET (first day of four; Sussex won toss): Sussex have scored 314 for seven wickets against Durham

ACCORDING to legend, possibly embroidered by Neville Cardus, when Sussex batted at Hove during the Golden Age, and Fry and Ranji were at the wicket, the rest of the team spent the day on the beach. If the present team was found on the beach, the Brighton public would probably assume they had been washed up there.

This match is, according to a man from Sunderland, who should know, a "relegation six-pointer", and most pundits would agree that these clubs, with Hampshire, are leaders in the race to finish last. The lack, therefore, of both invention and enterprise, on both sides, was surprising.

Durham chose an attack of five medium or fast-medium seamers, the only variation being Simon Brown's left-arm line. Riverside is a big ground, the pitch is chalk white and looks as though it might offer a little help by Friday; if it did live up to its reputation and remain bland, then surely a spinner might try to buy a few wickets?

Sussex, in turn, meandered through most of the day, giving the Durham bowling, with its generous estimate of the height and width of the stumps, a false but growing confidence.

Only Neil Lenham, perhaps grateful for a turning-up at Oxford, truly took advantage while his partner, Keith Greenfield, with 22 runs from 28 overs, had Sussex supporters wishing that Bill Athey would come in to speed up the proceedings.

The dressing-room would almost certainly respond by pointing out that, while there

was a fair amount of loose stuff on offer, each Durham bowler gave 100 per cent in effort and there was a little lingering doubt that the Lumley end was not all it was cracked up to be.

David Boon, who could have appeared in any playing picture of Fry and Ranji looking exactly in place, lost the toss for the fifth time in six championship matches, yet remains an engaging optimist. He persisted with three slips and a gully until tea and leans forward, at second slip, as if expecting every next ball to take a wicket. Battered as his bowlers might be, they will relish such support.

Sussex had just begun to pick up pace when Greenfield, encouraged by variations in length, went to pull Mike Foster and top-edged to the bowler.

Neil Taylor was unwrapping shots when, defending against Walker, he edged behind, the first hint of movement in the Lumley end. Lenham, deserving a century, was on 93 off 174 balls, including 15 fours, when he tried to turn the persevering Brown and was leg-before.

Athey's defence remains among the best, his self-confidence is untouched, yet in 18 overs to test he managed only 21 runs for the loss of Keith Newell, bowled by a ball that kept low, another reason for caution.

Any criticism might be called childish; he was averaging 74. His departure, 12 overs later, was the surprise: he was fencing against Mel Bets, Durham went up for the catch. Athey stood defiant until Chris Balderstone, the umpire, raised his finger.

Mike Newell produced two hearty square cuts before the Sussex tail wriggled, rather than waggled.

Bowen discovers rich seam

By JAMES ALLEN

NORTHAMPTON (first day of four; Northamptonshire won toss): Northamptonshire have scored 226 for nine wickets against Nottinghamshire

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE continue to defy expectations. The salutary experience of losing to Kent inside three days has evidently not dented the spirit that helped them successfully negotiate the first month of championship cricket and yesterday very much belonged to them.

No one personified their determination more than

Mark Bowen, whose performance was the stuff of dreams. He finished with figures of five for 52, having done the bulk of the damage before lunch. Of the 32 overs bowled in the morning, he delivered 15, swinging the ball away from the right-hander with admirable control. His four wickets came at a cost of only 27 runs. It was outstanding seam bowling.

At 29, he is enjoying the most rewarding weeks of a first-class career that began at Wantage Road. He received a generous hand at lunchtime, the acclaim all the sweeter on what was once his home ground. Discarded by Northamptonshire in 1995, he made a new beginning at Trent Bridge last year and took 11 wickets against Derbyshire last month.

He can expect plenty more hard labour this summer as Nottinghamshire's bowling resources are limited, the more so since Nathan Aspinall, the New Zealander, has replaced Mohammad Zahid, the Pakistani fast bowler, as their overseas player. Yesterday Aspinall's respectable medium pace accounted for Sales, but

it is for his batting that Nottinghamshire have signed him.

Tolley backed up Bowen well, prizing out Curran and Snape. Curran's departure started a calamitous period for Northamptonshire in which they lost four wickets for 14 runs in 15 overs.

The resistance of David Ripley, who made 77 in just over four hours, could not have been more timely. Murmurs of discontent could be heard around the ground when he emerged with the score at 69 for six. Nearly two hours later, the applause that greeted his half-century was tinged with relief.

Such was Nottinghamshire's desperation to finish the job as the evening wore on, and Emburey frustrated them further, that Johnson used an eighth bowler in Archer.

It was apt, though, that Bowen broke the stand, collecting his fifth wicket in the first over of his fifth spell when he uprooted Emburey's off stump. Had Archer been able to hold on to the hardest of chances at slip, when Ripley had made 30, it would have come sooner.

Rollins rallies after poor run

By RICHARD HOBSON

CHESTERFIELD (first day of four; Hampshire won toss): Derbyshire have scored 361 for seven wickets against Hampshire

SOME of the more constructive assessments of Mark Taylor and his absence of runs have agreed that his fortune could turn with a single piece of luck at the appropriate time.

The same is true for any batsman feeling the strain of poor form and when, at the end of September, Adrian Rollins reflects upon the season, he may recall an incident in the first over here yesterday as that moment.

Rollins had scored just 51 runs in his seven championship innings and could feel with some annoyance that his record was about to read 51 in eight after being sent back by Kim Barnett having pushed Bovill into the covers. The throw was poor, though, and Rollins scrambled back before Aymes could break the wicket. He proceeded to record the sixth hundred of his career and provide the backbone of a sizeable first-innings total in a fashion that

offered no clues to explain his previous discomfort.

While Rollins played the longest and most appropriate innings of the day, the most entertaining passage of play occurred with Chris Adams at the crease. In the morning, Adams had issued a public apology for his show of dissent last Sunday, when he stood his ground after being adjudged leg-before, and announced that he will not, after all, initiate proceedings to overturn the £750 fine imposed by Derbyshire.

"I believe the incident was a completely unique situation

which occurred only out of total confusion," Adams said. Quite what is unique about a batsman feeling aggrieved by a decision is difficult to understand, but his contrition, albeit belated, may spare him further censure when the England and Wales Cricket Board mulls over the umpire's report in due course.

Adams's 79 yesterday took 94 minutes and featured 11 fours and a six over long-on off Udal. Finally, he met a wide ball from Renshaw with a firm, but ill-timed, slash which Udal, at second slip, diverted to Hayden, at first.

It was easy to overlook Rollins during the second-wicket stand of 124 in 24 overs with Adams, but his punched driving off the back foot soon began to command approval. The pitch proved harmless and so, largely, did a bowling attack in which Udal offered the only alternative to seam.

Cassar laboured for 15 overs to produce just two scoring shots, but Clarke, bowled through the gate by Renshaw, Krikken, turned around by James, and DeFreitas batted around Rollins, who resumes today on 151.



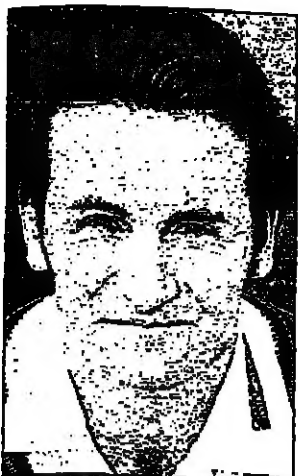
Rollins: sixth hundred

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CRICKET: FAST BOWLERS CAUSE HAVOC AS 21 WICKETS FALL IN COURSE OF HECTIC AND BEWILDERING DAY AT TAUNTON

Pitch cleared after Shine polishes off Lancashire



Shine repeat performance

By PAT GIBSON
TAUNTON (first day of four; Lancashire won toss): Lancashire, with nine second-innings wickets in hand, are 61 runs behind Somerset

THERE has been some extraordinary cricket over the extra-innings day at Taunton, with Lancashire winning the match in 1992, 1894 and 1925, and Bath in 1953 when poor old Bertie Buse was having his benefit.

It is hard to believe, however, that any of them were quite as inexplicable as this one. Lancashire, who went in to bat just as the sun was burning the last of the mist off the

Quantocks, were bowled out for 88 in 22 overs and one ball. Then Somerset, having cruised to 113 for one, lost their last nine wickets for 76.

With 21 wickets falling in the day, the umpires were obliged to notify Lord's of the strange goings-on, yet not even Nigel Plews, a former detective sergeant, could find any suspicious circumstances. Certainly there was nothing wrong with the pitch.

It was an odd, muddy colour, when the covers were taken off and it did change its complexion during the day. But that does not explain why Kevin Shine, of Somerset, Kevin Shine took seven for 43 and Lancashire's Peter Martin and Glenn Chapple responded with four wickets apiece.

Perhaps Dav Whatmore, the Lancashire coach, provided the answer when he talked about bad batting and decent bowling, although that was faint praise for Shine who could never have bowled better in his nine seasons shared between Hampshire, Middlesex and now Somerset. If he is ever to seek a fourth county, Lancashire would probably oblige. They have not forgotten how he took a career best eight for 47, including a hat-trick, for Hampshire against them at Old Trafford in 1992.

The Lancashire batsmen did give him every encouragement. Gallian hit his second ball to square leg, where Burns dived forward to take a fine catch and both Titchard and McKeown, the replacements for Atherton and Crawley, went back when

they should have been forward and were pinned leg-before.

Van Troost, playing his first championship match of the season, got into the act when Lloyd, perhaps surprised to find the ball so close to him, tried to cut and was caught behind before Shine produced the delivery of the day to extract Fairbrother's middle stump.

Watkinson tried to hit his way out of trouble, with 33 off 44 balls, but then he drove Rose to mid-off and with Shine removing Austin, Hegg and Martin and Rose getting Chapple caught behind first ball, the Lancashire innings was over in a shorter time than any in the championship for two years.

It looked as though Somerset might go the same way when Martin

and Chapple soon began to find the edges, but after Lathwell had been caught at second slip, Bowler and Holloway settled into a second-wicket partnership of 79 which showed that there was nothing for good batsmen to worry about.

Then Martin found the right length to claim Holloway and leg before with successive balls and Chapple slipped into the mode that brought him six for 18 in last year's NatWest Trophy final, so that despite some lusty blows from Parsons and Mushtaq, the Somerset lead was restricted to 101. There was still time for Van Troost to force Gallian to retire hurt after a blow on the fingers and Rose to bowl McKeown before Lancashire ended at 40 for one.

Lord's told as wickets tumble on pitch with two paces

By MICHAEL AUSTIN

HEADINGLEY (first day of four; Gloucestershire won toss): Yorkshire, with four first-innings wickets in hand, are 78 runs behind Gloucestershire

GLoucestershire, a lofty second in the championship table, still have no individual century-maker in the competition, though morally, Monty Lymbury deserved one. Lymbury, with typical refreshing freedom of strokeplay in the context of this attritional game, made 60, with 13 fours, from 37 balls.

Mastery over this curious two-paced pitch, on which 16 wickets tumbled to eight different bowlers, was inevitably transient. The odd ball misbehaved and bounced steeply off a length, notably to Michael Vaughan. He suffered a cracked bone in the left wrist after being struck by Michael Smith and could be absent for three weeks. As per regulations when 15 or more wickets fall in a day, the umpires, John Hampshire and Trevor Jesty, notified Lord's.

Some deliveries kept low, but the most mortal wounds were to batsmen's ego. With two successive wins and a nine-place rise to seventh, Yorkshire went from the elation of bowling out the opposition for 205 to deflation. Smith, fast left-arm, diminutive and with a bustling run reminiscent of Barry Sted, a fellow Yorkshire exile of yesteryear, dismissed David Byas and Darren Lehmann in the first three balls after tea, condemning later batsmen, notably Richard Blakely, to an evening of hard labour.

Byas was athletically caught at cover point by Tim Hancock, having ventured a stroke to square leg and Lehmann edged a catch to first slip two balls later.

Such misadventures were vividly familiar to Gloucestershire, though the diligent Nick Trainor weathered 129 balls in making 40 before being sixth out at 152. Trainor succumbed to a turning ball from Richard Stump, who also crept through Hancock's bat and pad defence.

Every collapse invariably involves a run out and Jack Russell, the batsman most likely to thrive in these difficult circumstances, was the victim, beaten by Vaughan's throw to the non-striker's end. Gloucestershire, having lunched at 125 for 3 with Trainor on 30, lost their last seven wickets for 80 in 100 minutes. Lymbury having already cut a ball from Gavin Hamilton into Gavin's hands, having been dropped on 44 by Byas at second slip.

Lymbury dominated a third wicket partnership of 78 with Trainor. Hamilton, deputising for Darren Gough, on Test duty, had the tonic of dismissing Rob Cunniffe with his first ball.

Gloucestershire's tail came quietly, as if gently tapped on the shoulder by the venomous Yorkshire attack. Martyn Ball was the exception, following the Lymbury philosophy with 35 from 33 balls. It was just another ingredient in an enthralling day.

Whitaker's century fails to inspire side

By SIMON WILDE

LORD'S (first day of four; Leicestershire won toss): Leicestershire have scored 267 for seven wickets against Middlesex

THIS game is proving less exciting in reality than it promised to be on paper. The third-placed team in the championship visiting fourth-placed; last year's champions versus the champions of 1993; everything augured well. But this was a day on which the sun shone, but not the cricket.

For two sessions, it was colourless stuff, Middlesex's attack bowling, in the main, tightly on a pitch which had quite a bit in it for all of them. Leicestershire, thoroughly efficient as always, doing their best to grit it out and wait for better times. These duly have come in the form of James Whitaker, their redoubtable captain, at the helm.

Whitaker scored 108 not out in his side's 267 for seven and will be well satisfied with his own day's work, if not especially with that of his side. Without him, they would be in a sorry mess now, though it remains to be seen how Middlesex fare on this pitch. Though they are high in the table, Leicestershire have yet to find their stride this season.

Whitaker himself was in no sort of form in the championship before this game and the harder he works for his runs the better he likes it. He had never scored a first-class hundred at Lord's before and when it came, late in the last session after he had been at the crease four and a half hours, he greeted it with arms raised high.

Fraser, who finished with four wickets, was a handful on a pitch with pace and bounce. Hewitt backed him up well, while Tufnell, who did not appear until the 45th over, constantly fretted away at the batsmen's confidence and conceded 32 runs in his 26 overs. But Whitaker waited patiently

for the loose stuff and, in the case of Johnson, did not wait in vain. Ramprakash kept bringing his third seamer back and Whitaker kept cutting him for four.

Johnson did not fail to leave his mark, though. In his second over after lunch, he dropped the ball on a good length, got it to lift, and it rapped Smith on the small finger of his left hand, a finger he broke during pre-season training in South Africa, delaying his season by three weeks. Smith threw his bat down sharply and immediately knew it was a bad blow. Sure enough, X-rays later confirmed another break.

Smith had scored 23 when he retired, at a time when Leicestershire were looking to push on after limiting the damage well during the morning. With the ball moving around off the pitch, Wells and Maddy deserved credit for surviving as long as they did, though both fell in the second hour. Wells taken well by Ramprakash at backward point, Maddy the victim of Fraser's best ball of the day.

After that, Whitaker, whom captaincy is making into the player he should have been, was disappointed to be a succession of partners. Johnson stayed an hour and then threw away his wicket, cutting idly into the hands of point; Habib played elegantly, as he always will, before tamely driving a return catch to Weekes; and Nixon was bowled by a ball pushed through by Tufnell. Even Parsons batted an hour, but made only five.

That said, Middlesex remained purposeful under their new leader, Ramprakash, whose early style is definitely *sotto voce*. He still fields away from the wicket, Gattling still does all the barking, and he still lets Gattling put his car in the captain's parking space behind the pavilion.



Penney, Warwickshire's top scorer with 84 in a first-innings total of 314, flicks Phillips away on the leg side at Tunbridge Wells yesterday

Thompson finds cure for Kent's ailment

By IVO TENNANT

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (first day of four; Warwickshire won toss): Kent, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 284 runs behind Warwickshire

AN AZURE day at the Nevill, birdsong in the air, the rhododendrons banked in full bloom. Apart from a new roof on the Blueanthes stand, the ground has hardly changed since Frank Woolley's day.

The corresponding championship match here last year finished in two days, but these conditions, which Warwickshire's batsmen did not utilise as they might have done, were co-existent with the setting.

On a flat pitch, Warwickshire, who won the toss, were bowled out for 314. This after Moles and Knight had made

73 in the first 14 overs and Penney and Ostler added 57 with some ease for the fourth wicket against a Kent attack that lost McCague early on. After he had bowled just five overs, he retired for the day with a sore hip. There was something poignant about this happening just as a Test series was about to start.

Kent were also without Headley, who is injured, Eatham, with England, and Patel, out for the season. Much of their bowling was entrusted to Thompson, who can play such first-team cricket as he is given in the sure knowledge that, as a qualified doctor, he has a long-term career to fall back on. He finished with five wickets, swinging the ball initially and giving away fewer runs once

he had broken the opening partnership.

Only last week, Warwickshire were knocked out of the Benson and Hedges Cup by Kent at Canterbury. Then, Donald strained his back, an injury from which he has still to recover. Giles, too, was missing yesterday. In these kind of conditions, a decent total was needed to give a weakened attack some succour.

A total, say, of 400, or even more. Mike Denness, who, among many other roles, oversees the state of pitches around the country, was casting an eye over the ground on which he received his county cap all those years ago. Today, he will be closely monitoring what is happening at Edgbaston.

It has been mooted that

Knight, as well as needing to find greater form, has a technical weakness outside off stump. He was out pushing forward in that region, taken at first slip off Thompson, but not before he had driven and played off his legs with some aplomb. Moles, in form after all his runs at Southampton, pulled and drove with glee.

There were eight fours in his 42 and, although he appeared constrained by the dismissals of Knight and Hemps, his misjudgment of Fleming's first straight ball was quite unexpected.

Ostler and Penney then put together the kind of partnership which suggested that a sizeable total would be forthcoming. It was ended by a sharp catch at gully by Ward off Thompson, who looks to

have added a yard of pace this season.

He collected, also, the wickets of Edmond and Small, tailenders who were starting to make too many runs for Kent's liking. Strang had a lengthy, rather flat bowl for a leg spinner, and perhaps as a consequence had only the wicket of Brown to show for it. In Patel's absence, Kent are inevitably short of spin, which meant that Long was given eight overs in the afternoon.

He dismissed Penney, although the shot was a poor one. Two runs short of his best score of the season, he picked out Phillips at mid-on. Smith then went to the first ball of the next over, leg-before to Phillips. Of the three catches Wells took at first slip, one, to remove Edmond, was high class.

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Derbyshire v Hampshire

CHESTERFIELD (first day of four; Hampshire won toss): Derbyshire have scored 267 for seven wickets against Hampshire

Derbyshire: First Innings

Hampshire: First Innings

Derbyshire: Second Innings

Hampshire: Second Innings

Derbyshire: Third Innings

Hampshire: Third Innings

Derbyshire: Fourth Innings

Hampshire: Fourth Innings

Derbyshire: Fifth Innings

Hampshire: Fifth Innings

Derbyshire: Sixth Innings

Hampshire: Sixth Innings

Derbyshire: Seventh Innings

Hampshire: Seventh Innings

Derbyshire: Eighth Innings

Hampshire: Eighth Innings

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Derbyshire: Fifteenth Innings

Hampshire: Fifteenth Innings

Derbyshire: Sixteenth Innings

Hampshire: Sixteenth Innings

Derbyshire: Seventeenth Innings

Hampshire: Seventeenth Innings

Derbyshire: Eighteenth Innings

Hampshire: Eighteenth Innings

Derbyshire: Nineteenth Innings

Hampshire: Nineteenth Innings

Derbyshire: Twentieth Innings

Hampshire: Twentieth Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-first Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-first Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-second Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-second Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-third Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-third Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-fourth Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-fourth Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-fifth Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-fifth Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-sixth Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-sixth Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-seventh Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-seventh Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-eighth Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-eighth Innings

Derbyshire: Twenty-ninth Innings

Hampshire: Twenty-ninth Innings

Derbyshire: Thirtieth Innings

Hampshire: Thirtieth Innings

YESTERDAY'S SCOREBOARDS

Northamptonshire v Nottinghamshire

Northamptonshire: First Innings

Nottinghamshire: First Innings

Northamptonshire: Second Innings

Nottinghamshire: Second Innings

Northamptonshire: Third Innings

Nottinghamshire: Third Innings

Northamptonshire: Fourth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Fourth Innings

Northamptonshire: Fifth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Fifth Innings

Northamptonshire: Sixth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Sixth Innings

Northamptonshire: Seventh Innings

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Northamptonshire: Fourteenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Fourteenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Fifteenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Fifteenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Sixteenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Sixteenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Seventeenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Seventeenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Eighteenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Eighteenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Nineteenth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Nineteenth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twentieth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twentieth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-first Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-first Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-second Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-second Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-third Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-third Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-fourth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-fourth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-fifth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-fifth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-sixth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-sixth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-seventh Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-seventh Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-eighth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-eighth Innings

Northamptonshire: Twenty-ninth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Twenty-ninth Innings

Northamptonshire: Thirtieth Innings

Nottinghamshire: Thirtieth Innings

IN BRIEF

Black's hopes of world success rise

ROGER BLACK'S prospects of victory in the 400 metres at the world athletics championships in Athens this summer advanced yesterday with news that there was little realistic hope that Michael Johnson would recover from injury in the US team (David Powell writes).

Johnson, the world and Olympic 400 metres champion, suffered a quadriceps pull in his 150 metres one-to-one challenge with Donovan Bailey in Toronto on Sunday.

Paul Edwards, the British shot putter serving a four-year suspension after failing a drugs test and who is seeking early reinstatement claiming restraint of trade under European law, has his case in the London High Court adjourned yesterday until tomorrow.

Cycling: Yvonne McGregor will try to regain the world 1hr record, held by Jeannie Longo, of France, over 48.159kms, at Manchester on June 16 to 21.

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TOP BATSMAN IN FIRST INNINGS

TOP ENG. BAT 7/2 Atherton 7/2 Stewart 7/2 Thorpe 4/1 Hussain 9/2 Butcher 6/1 Crawley 8/1 A. Hollis 16/1 Ealham 40/1 Croft

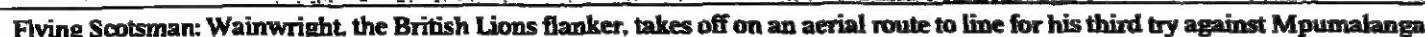
TOP AUSSIE BAT 3/1 M. Waugh 4/1 Elliott 4/1 S. Waugh 9/2 Blevett 9/2 Taylor 11/2 Bevan 25/1 Healy 50/1 Warne 100/1 Kasparowicz

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Be more logical about your irrational fears

Just because you have been scared senseless by reports of a new bug that eats away at the inside of your eyeballs, until suddenly one day you're looking at Michael Jackson and he actually looks black, don't automatically assume that the next health scare will be just as spooky. Chances are it will be much spookier.

That seemed to be the gist of *Anxiety Attack* (BBC2), a peek through parted fingers at the psychology of health scares. The message was that you needn't worry so much about meningitis, or flesh-eating bugs, or contaminated baby milk. These things may be scary, but they kill fewer people than, say, heart disease or car accidents. So, hey, if you want to panic about them instead, but people do panic. The Leylands found out just how much when their daughter, Michaela, contracted meningitis on holiday in Majorca. Anxious fellow pas-

sengers barred her from boarding the plane home. Medical certificates giving the all-clear from Spanish doctors swayed nobody. "They more or less said, 'If they get on, then we're getting off,'" said Michaela's father, Les.

Between 150 and 200 people a year die of meningitis, which is a fraction of the number of deaths from other diseases, such as heart disease," says Dr Norman Beggs of the Public Health Laboratory Service. In other words, "parent" worries are out of all proportion to the real risks. So who is to blame? Newspapers? Telly? Only up to a point. Terence Lee, psychology professor at St Andrews, reckons "the media do not create anxiety, but whenever they see anxiety-provoking situations or anxious people, they're able to formulate that and feed it back to the general public, usually in an amplified form." Any other suspects? Us: too gullible for our own good.

But what this programme didn't seem to acknowledge is that we are happy with risks if we feel that we can calculate them: crossing a busy road involves a web of calculations about how fast we can walk, how fast the traffic is moving, how late we are for an appointment, our own recklessness, our assessment of the driving ability of the man in the red Volvo, and we cross the road. Of course, we still get run over, but we die feeling that the odds were on our side. Catching meningitis may be as unlikely as getting a stranger's phone number, but that's what makes it so spooky. We don't know how to duck to avoid it.

How should the media act, then? The paradox at the heart of this documentary is that if a disease is rare, then it is eerily newsworthy. On the other hand, if it affects millions, then it is too commonplace to be recorded.

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

We might think the media irresponsible for making a crisis out of whether mobile phones cause brain tumours. But we'd think it's a bit of a joke if it made a song and dance about the death of Mrs. Enid Thimbley from an everyday heart attack. People would read their newspapers and say, so what? (Nothing personal Enid.) You got the feeling that the presenter Jolyon Jenkins would

like to do is finger the rest of the media for scare-mongering: probably rightly, too. But he pulled up short. Why? Maybe BBC2 queered his pitch on Tuesday with a programme called *Home Ground*. It was about meningitis. And its title? *Every Parent's Nightmare*. Every, mark you.

Some people consider Peter Mandelson a health scare, so we were looking forward to seeing him dissected by clinical psychologist Oliver James in *The Chair* (BBC2). This programme, which immediately preceded *Anxiety Attack*, did its very own amplifying and distortion. Although it gave the impression that we were eavesdropping on Labour's appointed Minister Without Portfolio, the interview was filmed more than a year ago.

The makers, a few weeks ago, also released a sensationalist still of a fearful Mandelson - recalling his late father - as a teaser. The

interview turned out to contain fewer thrills than a children's Lucky Bag on Blackpool pier. Even though James prides himself on asking nifty questions about sex, there weren't any. Why hire a psychologist to produce such a bland interview? Jeremy Paxman could have squeezed out more.

In the final half of *Reputations* (BBC2), Bertrand Russell turned out to be a bit like meningitis: he may have infected few people over the years, but when he did, the effects were usually devastating, often fatal.

Wife after wife, child after child, were mentally bullied, or merely abandoned. He was a prophet and sage in public, but trouble once the front door was closed. "I'm so tired," said his granddaughter, Felicity, "of people telling me what a wonderful man Russell was, what a humanitarian he was, when he didn't, so to speak,

begin with charity at home. Everybody who I knew as family would say as either crazy or dead." When you've just referred to your own grandpa as "Russell", you don't need to say very much more.

But she did: she said she felt sure that Russell - after moving in to the Richmond home of Felicity's father, John Russell, and John's American wife, Susan Lindsay - had an affair with Susan. It was 1950. Bertrand was 78 and alone. "I'm sure my father was having an affair with my mother. For all I know, they may even have said something to him. They were cruel enough to not even hide it." In 1955 John was declared insane.

Reputations dug up haunting archive footage. But you could tell that none of it was as haunting as the memories scrolling before Felicity's eyes as she recalled Russell's mischief. They would have been too scary to show on TV.

- 6.00am Business Breakfast** (73785)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (78143)
9.00 Breakfast News Extra (5997056)
9.20 Style Challenge (3809404)
9.45 Kilroy (1204747)
10.25 Who'll Do the Pudding? Top chefs create delicious dishes (3694788)
10.45 News, Regional News (T) and **Weather** (8616683)
10.50 Cricket: First Test England v Australia Live coverage of the first morning's play from Edgbaston, in the first of six Tests for the Ashes. Continues on BBC2 (53582105)
12.35pm Neighbours (T) (4954834)
1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (71230)
1.30 Regional News (T) and **Weather** (15018105)
1.40 Cricket: First Test Coverage of the afternoon session from Edgbaston Continues on BBC2 (53633785)
4.00 Postman Pat (5754698) 4.15 **Pisano** (5680292) 4.20 **Julia Kell** and **Harriet Hyde** (T) (5734834)
4.35 Return to Jupiter (T) (6249414)
5.00 Newsround (T) (8961327)
5.10 The Biz The children who attend the Markov School go on location making a film when they meet Huw, a man with an ego (T) (7611230)
5.35 Neighbours Madge and Harold's reunion hits a snag (720259)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (T) and **Weather** (766)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (T) (178)
7.00 Watchdog Healthcheck With reports from John Nicholson, Angela Rippon and Toyah Wilcock (T) (3850)
7.30 EastEnders Grant is furious when he learns about Peggy and Tiffany's plans; Mark asks Ruth's help in reopening the case against Arthur (T) (230)
8.00 Crime Beat Marilyn Lewis joins the police as they try to stop joyriders (T) (6968)
8.30 Keeping Mum Comedy series about a confused mother who is cared for by her son in her dotage. When Peggy starts "time-travelling", Andrew decides to ship her off to a nursing home. Last in the series with Stephanie Cole (T) (8105)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (T) Followed by **Regional News and Weather** (4747)
9.30 999 Documentary series presenting recreations of heroic rescues. This week's stories include a teenager impaled on a rusty bolt and an 81-year-old woman stranded in a car on the edge of a 120ft cliff (T) (692559)
10.20 The Lying Game Angus Dayton asks whether it is ever morally justifiable to withhold or manipulate the truth (T) (354850)
10.55 Question Time chaired by David Dimbleby from London (T) (7344563)
12.00 Cutler's Way (1981) with Jeff Bridges, John Heard and Lisa Eichhorn. An alcoholic Vietnam veteran becomes obsessed with revenge against a tycoon he believes murdered his father. Directed by Ivan Passer (554983)
1.45am-1.50 Weather (5030780)

- 6.00am O.U.** Accumulating Years and Wisdom (T) (858765) 6.25 **Zimbabwe** Health for All (5957501) 6.50 **Who Calls the Shots?** (768828)
7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (T and signing) (1207211)
7.30 Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (T) (6122105) 7.55 **Blue Peter** (T) (2314766) 8.20 **Freeman Sam** (T) (8618853)
8.35 The Record (2964582)
9.00 Lifeschool Extra: Careers (3894018) 9.25 **The Geography Programme** (5974105) 9.45 **Watch Out!** (4749334) 10.00 **Teletoonies** (30495) 10.30 **Storyline** (4346533) 10.45 **The Experimenter** (5230389) 11.00 **Space Ark** (2435582) 11.15 **21st Century** Danger Detectives (5577853) 11.35 **Landmarks**. Britain Since 1930 (4746308) 12.00 **Teaching Today** (1612360)
12.35pm Cricket: First Test - England v Australia (495476)
1.00pm Lifeschool (2637853) 1.35 **Job Bank** (15015018) 1.45 **Numberline** (15028582) 2.00 **Freeman Sam** (T) (83905834)
2.10 Atlas Smith and Jones (T) (3088230) 2.30 **News** (T) 3.05 **Westminster** with Nick Ross (4004478) 3.55 **News** (T)
4.00 Cricket: First Test - England v Australia (7621121)
6.25 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (700292) 7.10 **The Ren & Stimpy Show** (190940)

- 6.00am GMTV** (979143) 6.25 **Supermarket Sweep** (T) (2824259) 9.55 **Regional News** (T) (4501292) 10.00 **The Time, the Place** (27921) 10.30 **This Morning** (6655587) 12.20am **Regional News** (T) (1987698) 12.30 **News** (T) and **Weather** (4980259) 12.55 **Shortland Street** (4958650)
1.25 Home and Away (T) (6015192) 1.50 **Afternoon Live** (5132043) 2.20 **Afternoon Live** (3665327) 2.50 **Afternoon Live** (3665327)
3.20 News (T) (3133056) 3.25 **Regional News** (T) (3133227) 3.30 **The Riddlers** (T) (3943414) 3.40 **Wizards** (T) (899495) 3.50 **Rupert** (516650) 4.15 **Transylvania Pet Shop** (T) (9267388) 4.40 **Sweet** (T) (6575124)
5.10 A Country Practice (8558124) 5.40 **News** (T) and **Weather** (56547) 6.00 **Home and Away** (707834) 6.25 **HTV West** (808563) 6.30 **The West Tonight** (414) 7.00 **Emmerdale** Nick's court case causes fresh agony for Kathy. An angry Bill confronts Kim in the stables (T) (5018) 7.30 **3-D** A three-year-old Down's syndrome girl is being given cosmetic surgery to change her appearance. Plus, reports on outraged holidaymakers who took decisive action when air and rail companies failed to give them satisfactory service (T) (688)
8.00 The Bill: The Wrath of God A preacher dealing in doggy miracles catches the attention of Skye and Carver (T) (4768)
8.30 My Wonderful Life Donna is tempted to accept the offer of a new life and career in Portugal (T) (6501)
9.00 Bodyguards: The Killing Ground Shaw and Worrell are assigned to protect an author who has been sentenced to death by Islamic extremists. Louise Lombard, Sean Pertwee, John Strain and Reed Raw. Last in series (T) (9785)
10.00 News (T) and **Weather** (90292) 10.30 **Regional News** (T) (442579) 10.40 **The West Tonight** with Richard Lyndon and Alison Delaney (888282) 11.30 **Freeze Frame** The role of the horse in Westerns (T) (363747) 11.45 **Highlander** (943630) 12.35am **In Bed with McInerney** (7801167) 1.10 **Funny Business** (1088525) 1.40 **Cyber Cafe** (1613471) 2.10 **Late and Loud** (8424780) 3.10 **3-D** (37953709) 3.40 **The Good Sex Guide** Live (9735544) 4.35 **The Time, the Place** (8125594) 5.00 **Garden Calendar** (59544) 5.30 **News** (98821)

- 6.00am HTV West** except: 12.55pm-1.25 **A Country Practice** (4568650) 5.10-5.40 **Shortland Street** (9858124) 6.25 **Central News** (715853) 10.40 **Pulling Power** (953834) 11.10 **Crime Stalker** (588940) 12.10 **Alfred Hitchcock Presents** (8116450) 12.40 **Funny Business** (4388506) 1.10 **Ed's Night Party** (1068525) 1.40 **Club Nation** (5202054) 2.40 **The Loop** (368457) 3.05 **Late and Loud** (1947761) 4.00 **Central Jobfinder '97** (3978032) 5.20 **Asian Eye** (4654633)
WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except: 12.55 **Home and Away** (5177747) 1.20-1.50 **Emmerdale** (23427834) 5.10-5.40 **Home and Away** (8858124) 6.00-7.00 **Westcountry Live** (41414) 10.30 **Westcountry News** (466259) 10.45 **Richard Dignace** for **One Night Only** (807501) 11.45 **New York News** (943630)
MERIDIAN
As HTV West except: 5.10-5.40 **Home and Away** (8858124) 6.00 **Meridian Tonight** (834) 6.30-7.00 **Grass Roots** (414) 10.30 **Meridian News and Weather** (466259) 10.45 **Film: Holy Matrimony** (8277308) 5.00am **Freeze Frame** (59544)
ANGLIA
As HTV West except: 12.55-1.25 **A Country Practice** (4568650) 5.10-5.40 **Shortland Street** (8858124) 6.25 **Anglia News** (715853) 10.40 **The Road Show** (953834) 11.10 **Go Fishing** (890292) 11.40 **Hunter** (743940)
Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (86405) 7.00 **The Big Breakfast** (81853) 8.00 **Bewitched** (17969) 9.30 **Yagellon** (498259) 12.00 **House to House** (97105) 12.30pm **Ricki Lake** (31037) 1.00 **Slot Melburn** (1068945) 1.15 **Deri Deg** (10657650) 1.25 **Film: The Mafia Story** (45031921) 3.20 **Fresh Pop** (3130969) 3.30 **Collectors' Lot** (292) 4.00 **Fifteen-to-One** (327) 4.30 **Absolutely Animals** (211) 5.00 **S Pump** (6124) 5.30 **Countdown** (563) 6.00 **Newyddion** (347501) 6.05 **Heno** (718940) 6.35 **Slon & Sian** (616143) 7.00 **Pobol y Cwm** (811921) 7.25 **Sgrin Ti Sgrin** (193308) 8.00 **Pobol y Cwm** (811921) 8.30 **Newyddion** (4143) 9.00 **The Jewel in the Crown** (7150) 11.00 **The Entertainers** (5230) 11.30 **NBA Finals** (87037) 12.30am **Dispatches** (4381877)



Dre Everington and Esmail (7.30pm)



Mark Wingett as Jim Carver (8.00pm)



Menopause victim Emma (8.00pm)



Forrest and Learned (8.30pm)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a Video PlusCode. The Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (+), Pluscode (+) and Video PlusCode are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

- For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday**
- SKY 1**
6.00am Morning Glory (72828) 9.00 **Reps and Keville** Live (6259) 10.00 **Anders World** (51704) 11.00 **Days of Our Lives** (82300) 12.00 **Open House** (5018) 1.00pm **Genio** (74789) 2.00 **Sally Jessy Raphael** (89555) 3.00 **Arnie Jones** (74230) 4.00 **Open House** (5018) 5.00 **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 6.00 **Open House** (5018) 7.00 **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 8.00 **Open House** (5018) 9.00 **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 10.00 **Open House** (5018) 11.00 **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 12.00 **Open House** (5018) 1.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 2.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 3.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 4.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 5.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 6.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 7.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 8.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 9.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 10.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 11.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 12.00am **Star Trek: Voyager** (72828) 1.00am 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RACING 45

Can Hanbury fashion victory with first Derby runner?

SPORT

THURSDAY JUNE 5 1997

TENNIS 47

Rafter's classic approach brings victory in Paris



England captain determined to prevent Australia gaining early advantage at Edgbaston

Atherton demands prompt service

BY ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

EVEN on his darkest days, and there have been a few of those, Michael Atherton's desire to remain as England captain has been sustained by one profound wish. He yearns to beat Australia. Now, on the ground where it all began and the day he equals Peter May's record for longevity in this most demanding job, he has a distant but distinct sight of fulfilment.

To speak of England regaining the Ashes is, of course, bold and speculative. How could it be otherwise when the last four grief-stricken Test series against Australia have produced an aggregate score of two England wins against 14 for the opposition?

There have been times when the teams have seemed so far apart that they might come from different planets, when the contrast in their approach, management and support structure — never mind ability — has been so stark as to make a patriotic Englishman weep. Yet suddenly there is a sense of change, sharp enough to make the notion of England winning less of a hopeless fancy than usual.

Mark Taylor, Australia's embattled captain, has had his own preoccupations of late, but it has not prevented him from noticing the trend. "England have got a good spirit going," he said yesterday. "They seem to be more buoyant and I reckon they are going to give us a tough fight."

The bell for the first round

sounds this morning at Edgbaston and proceedings will be watched by the first of three successive full houses, an attendance statistic never previously achieved on this ground.

Australia remain the bookmakers' favourites to win the match and the Cornhill series, but the odds against England retaking the Ashes have shrunk from 8-1 to 11-4 on a rare wave of public belief.

DETAILS

ENGLAND (from): M A Atherton (captain), M A Butler, A J Stewart, G P Thorpe, N Hussain, J P Crawley, M A Ealham, A J Holles, R D B Gird, D Gough, A R Coddick, D E Malcolm

AUSTRALIA: M A Taylor (captain), M T G Elliott, G Bennett, M E Waugh, S R Waugh, M G Bevan, (A Healy, S R Waugh, M S Kasproutz, J N Gillespie, G D McShane)

Umpires: P Willey and S Bucknor (West Indies)

Third umpire: J W Holder (Match referee: R S Madgale (St Lanka)

TELEVISION: Live: BBC1 10.50am-12.35pm, BBC2 12.35pm-1.40, BBC1 1.40-4.10, BBC2 4.05-5.25, Highlights: Sky Sports 2.8pm, BBC2 11.15pm

RADIO: Live: Radio 4 10.55am-1.0pm, 1.40-6.0

By next Monday, the prospect will either have crystallised enticingly or condensed to the unpalatable dregs of yesterday's dreams. The first Test of a series is always influential but, in this case, there are many good reasons for believing it will be paramount.

If England should lose over the next five days in Birmingham, surrendering whatever psychological gains

they have made in the past fortnight, it will be hard to see them coming back. They must not, dare not, lose and Atherton, beginning his 41st match in charge on the ground where he assumed the captaincy, from Graham Gooch, four years ago, knows it.

He needs no reminding that his team has acquired the feckless habit of beginning Test series as if infected with a death wish. All too often, damage done on the initial days of a series has undermined hope and confidence, resulting in what is at best a mission of redemption and at worst a lost cause.

"We are stressing the need to start well," Atherton said yesterday. "From the first session, really from the first ball, we're looking to grab the initiative." To grab it, moreover, from a team that has developed a very different habit — one of swamping opponents at the outset of a series so that their propensity for appearing fallible in later games comes across as nothing more than an act of mercy.

They have done this against Pakistan, West Indies and South Africa in the past 18 months, building a healthy reputation as a team that wins a lot, loses a little and never draws a game. Although nothing official grants them the title of world leaders, it is difficult to dispute their entitlement.

All this needs reiterating, not to damp down the expectation, but to emphasise the task confronting England. The soap opera of Taylor's lack of form may well have had an insidious effect on team morale, but it has also dominated to such a degree that it has been easy to forget there are ten other Australians who can play a bit. In the Waugh brothers, they have two of the best half-dozen batsmen in the world. In Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, they have a leg spinner and a seamer as good as any.

Australia settled on their final XI 24 hours ahead of the game, confirming that Greg Blewett will bat at No 3 and that Michael Kasproutz will play as a third seam bowler, a

change in their favoured balance that acknowledges the conditions they expect to face.

England still have a delicate decision, or two, to make today. First, Atherton — it will largely be down to him — must make a choice between Adam Holloake and Mark Ealham for the final place. Ealham's superior bowling makes him the pragmatic preference.

Then, if he should win the toss, Atherton must balance the advantages of bowling first, on a green-tinged pitch and in the forecast humidity, against the perils of batting last on a surface notorious for its uneven bounce.

Clumps of tuft grass decorated the pitch yesterday, along with a mosaic of thin cracks. The England management sounded content and were certainly in no hurry for Steve Rouse, the groundsman, to get his mower out. Warwickshire, naturally, craved a five-day game but England simply want conditions that might discomfort the Australians; compromise may be reached via the medium of a disagreeable weather forecast.

"I don't think anyone really knows what this pitch will do," Atherton said. "It is not a massively important toss but I know what I want to do if I win it." Presumably, barring cloud cover, he would bat first, though his ambivalence over the toss suggests he would be equally happy to leave the dilemma to Taylor.

Atherton was bullish yesterday. "I want this series pretty badly," he said, "and I am confident we can win. But if you don't think that when you start a series, there is no point in turning up." This morning, however, Atherton will be one of many thousand who turn up with a rare degree of conviction that this could be the year to end a decade of subservience.

□ Cornhill Insurance, which has sponsored England Test series since 1978, yesterday announced a further three-year investment worth £9 million.

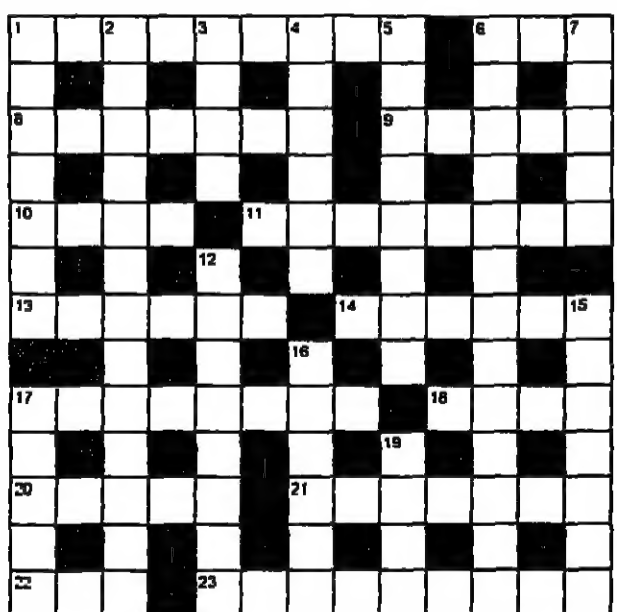
John Woodcock, page 48
Taylor defiant, page 48
Lancashire tumble, page 49



Devon Malcolm, recalled to Test duty by the new England management, warms up in the nets at Edgbaston yesterday

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1112 in association with
BRITISH MIDLAND



ACROSS

- 1 Hotel desk; party (9)
- 2 Sticky trap; woven structure (5)
- 3 Macdonald massacre site, 1692 (7)
- 4 Big round fruit, has water version (5)
- 5 Butter / flour mixture (4)
- 6 Unexpected good fortune (5)
- 7 Breakfast (of troops) (6)
- 8 Squalid, vile (6)
- 9 Made (one) liked (8)
- 10 Half-asleep; silly (slang) (4)
- 11 Metallic alien (Dr Who) (5)
- 12 Type of bomber; quiet secrecy (7)
- 13 Joker; shake with energy (3)
- 14 (Car) given new colour (9)

DOWN

- 1 Eyes; compliments (7)
- 2 It is taken by Formula 1 winner (9,4)
- 3 Overon's assistant (MND) (4)
- 4 Spanish peninsula (6)
- 5 Show off; pardon me! (slang) (8)
- 6 Barbarous, uncouth (slang) (4,3,6)
- 7 Trite (5)
- 8 Plane bandit (8)
- 9 Without getting feet wet (3,4)
- 10 People count (6)
- 11 Provide with income (5)
- 12 (Wind) change course (4)

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All flights are subject to availability.

Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6896, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 1111

ACROSS: 1 Impose 4 Adored 8 Piloted 10 Lieat 11 Lira (Lira)
12 Platonic 14 Malicious 18 Siroccos 20 Aria 22 Dight 23 Steroid
24 Sodden 25 Brunei
DOWN: 1 Impale 2 Pilgrim 3 Site 5 Dilution 6 Rido
7 Delect 9 Delicious 13 Black-tie 15 Sirloin 16 Asides
17 Gandhi 19 Rigid 21 Weir

Lions furious at the violence that may deprive them of Weir

FROM DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT, IN WITBANK, SOUTH AFRICA

THE possible loss of Daddie Weir, the Scotland lock, removed the gilt from the best performance of the British Isles rugby union tour of South Africa yesterday. They defeated Mpumalanga, formerly South-Eastern Transvaal and playing for the first time under their new Zulu name, by 64-14 but a boot took Weir to hospital with damaged knee ligaments and only today will the tour management know whether he can continue.

The Lions would have cited Marius Bosman, the Mpumalanga lock, for foul play had not International Rugby Football Board regulations prevented them from doing so on the grounds that the referee, Carl Spangenberg, dealt with the incident during the game.

He spoke to Bosman and reversed a penalty in favour of the Lions, but that was not the only incident in which Bosman was involved.

He and Elandre van der Berg, his fellow lock, had no qualms in stamping on Rob Wainwright's face at a ruck halfway through the first half, after the Scotland flanker had given the Lions the best of starts by scoring three tries within eight minutes. But Bosman could also be seen punching at mauls and if the Lions could not cite him after the Weir incident, they might have done so for others.

Gert Grobler, the Mpumalanga manager, claimed that any incidents were "unintentional" but agreed that he would take disciplinary action if video study appeared to

merit it. The Lions management, however, were fuming and will have lost no time in acquainting Ruan Oberholzer, chief executive of the South African Rugby Football Union (Sarf), who attended the match, with their views.

The tour agreement does not provide for a match commissioner, in the way that operates during the Super 12 tournament and the tri-nations series in the southern hemisphere, and perhaps it is time that it should. "Daddie was injured by a foot coming across his knee on the side of a ruck-maul," Ian McGeechan, the Lions coach, said. "Sarf know we are upset about the incident and we will leave it at that for now."

Fran Cotton, the manager, added: "We all share a joint

responsibility. If we feel an act of foul play has taken place which deserves further punishment, we all share responsibility in making sure the player is disciplined." But the Lions were delighted at the level of discipline showed by their players, none of whom offered retaliation despite the sometimes-blatant attempts to unsettle them.

"Something as cold-blooded as that wasn't in context with the game as a whole," McGeechan said. "It would disappoint us greatly if Daddie doesn't have a Lions tour because of something like that. If someone has rugby at heart, they will be responsible for their players and if Mpumalanga take action, we would be pleased." That, though, will be cold comfort for Weir should bad medial ligament damage necessitate his replacement, possibly by the younger of the Quinell brothers, Craig.

However, McGeechan was clearly delighted that the hard work of his players in training, both the forwards at the set scrums and the backs in creating space, earned a tetry haul. "We are beginning to play a good, fluid game in which everyone is involved," he said. "It's a hard game to play and if you are not self-disciplined, you can't play it."

Tobie Coetzee, the Mpumalanga captain, who had been less than impressed with the Lions' opening matches, added soberly: "Looking at our Springbok side, there are some warning lights flickering for them."



Ieuan Evans, the powerful Lions wing, bursts through a ragged defence at Witbank

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